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THE VOICE OF THE HOME:

OR,

HOW ROY WENT WEST, AND HOW HE CAME HOME AGAIN.

BY

MRS. S. M. I. HENRY,

AUTHOR OF "THE PLEDGE AND THE CROSS," "VICTORIA," "AFTER THE TRUTH" SERIES, "EVANGELISTIC MANUAL," ETC.

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DEDICATION

TO MY CHILDREN,

THE LITTLE HOME-KEEPER AND HER BROTHERS,

MAMMA'S BOOK IS TENDERLY DEDICATED;

WITH THE PRAYER

THAT THEIR HOMES MAY ALWAYS SPEAK FOR ALL THINGS

PURE AND TRUE;

AND AGAINST ALL THINGS WRONG AND EVIL.

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INTRODUCTION.

NO epoch fails of its Chronicler; and the books of Mrs. Henry, since the Crusade, preserve the finest essence not only of that Pentecostal movement, but of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, its lineal successor. Imbued with the spirit of this work from the beginning; calling the women of her own city (Rockford, Ill.) to arms, that memorable winter of 1874; thenceforward an indefatigable Temperance evangelist, and now Superintendent of this Department for our National W. C. T. U., Mrs. Henry is uniquely qualified to do this work, for she speaks whereof she knows. Add to this training her rare facility in composition, especially adapted to the narrative style, which best suits her thrilling theme, and we behold our gifted friend fore-ordained by fitness for the hour's need. What her choice book, "The Pledge and the Cross," is doing for our gospel work, we may expect the present earnest story to accomplish in the homes. Other things equal, commend us to the writer on home-training, whose own "Young Hopefuls" incarnate in their character and habits the results aimed at in their mother's theory. Tried by this rule, our author has a right to speak, for her three fatherless bairns (two of them boys), furnish delightful illustrations of her power to "suit the action to the word" in the supremely weighty matters of Home's Law and Gospel. Indeed I cannot forbear mentioning, just here, that, after seven years of

sojourning in their homes, scattered through forty States, I am prepared to match against all comers, in good behavior and earnestness of purpose, the children whose mothers have enlisted in our great White Ribbon Army.

As the Home speaks, so is the Boy—this is the key note of the present volume; and our unions cannot engage in better work than to introduce it through Sunday-schools and "Loan Libraries" to the sitting-room tables of wine and cider-drinking Christians. For it illustrates how alcohol kills in spite of Gospel teaching; what power it has to defeat the best effort of the most honest Christian mother; and how surely it will do *its own work,* in spite of all her efforts—if she gives it a chance. The story places emphasis upon the solemn fact that the wine-glass and cider-mug are not rendered harmless because they stand on the same table with the family Bible; nay, their curse is all the more deadly because of the height from which their devotees must fall in such a case. "Roy," the central figure in the picture, is a model of physical strength; has a true and tender heart, and cherishes the dream of noble manhood. But the physical law of cause and effect written in his members, defeats him at every point; *his mother's wine,* which she taught him to love, being the earliest "procuring cause" of his resultant ruin. Precisely what is needed, and all that is essential in most Christian homes, is *an arrest of thought;* and the parents who would not find in this story an arrest of the most emphatic character, are few and far between.

Well has Miss Colman chosen as the motto of her literature work: "*My people perish for lack of knowledge.*" When we charitably trace the indifference around us to this explanation, we shall work with greatly increased intelligence and cheerfulness; for then we shall make the circulation of temperance literature our "right arm of the service;" and by steadily acting on the conviction that

> "Evil is wrought for want of thought,
> But not for want of heart,"

we shall gently win to the greatest of reforms those Christian people whom we only alienate still farther from us by recrimination.

To such a consummation this bright and kindly book from our mellow-hearted friend, is a contribution of exceeding value. May she live long not only to help forward our women's work, but to bless "The Little Home-Maker and her Brothers," who are the earliest, most unsparing, yet most appreciative critics of her books, is the sisterly wish of

FRANCES E. WILLARD,

New York, Oct. 10, 1881. *53 Bible House.*

THE VOICE OF THE HOME.

CHAPTER I.

IT stood under the chin of a hill, whose face looked westward, that is the house, while the farm crept up to the brow, where it was crowned with a wreath of hemlocks, pines, and beaches; and downward over the valley to the river, where the broad meadows were skirted with elms, and dotted here and there with a clump of maples that had been allowed to stand and grow on, if they did shade the grass, because "mother" could not bear to see them fall,—and John Mason confessed to a weakness for the trees himself.

It was known as the Mason farm, for miles and miles—out even to the railway station and county seat—the farm on which John Mason had been born, and where he had cared for his father and mother until they died, and which he had inherited with its small improvements; to which he had won the school-teacher years before, and where they lived among their woods and meadows and orchards and vines, their bees and cows, and with their one only child, a simple quiet life of godly contentment.

The farm was noted for its dainty butter and cheese, and its domestic wines for communion pur-

poses, made—and in the very making consecrated—by the fair hands of the woman whom all who knew both loved and praised.

Mary Mason was the daughter of an engineer of an ocean steamer, a man of mark in his sphere, who had gone with his engine to the bottom of the sea in a storm, when his daughter and her brother and sister were but infants. Their mother did not long survive her husband; and the children were scattered, lost to each other utterly, and Mary had never known the real rest of a home since, until she came to take the place of wife and daughter in the Mason farm-house, about a year before mother Mason died. She came with much knowledge of the world, of which John Mason had hardly dreamed, but she was so glad to rest and be loved, that she cared no more for the world beyond the horizon of blue hills that shut in the river and the valley, and bounded her vision with lines of perpetual peace.

She was a religious woman, with a deep and practical faith; and John Mason was a godly man. They worshipped at the little country church some four miles down the river, and to all their neighbors the light of their window was the light of Christly living and faith.

It was just at sunset. Roy and his dog Napoleon were bringing the cows down from the upper pasture, and came into the lane, in full view of the house, just as the last rays of the sunlight, streaming over the opposite highland, named by his mother "Sunset Hill," fell upon it and lighted all its windows with a strange, glorious illumination, that it always made the

boy's heart glad to see. He stopped and climbed the lane fence, letting the cows stroll idly on, while he sat and feasted his eyes on the spectacle that ever moved him so. The vision was always new and marvellous to him, although it had been repeated with nearly every sunset since he got his first glimpse of this, which had come to be one of the chief glories of his home.

As he sat perched on the "rider" of the rail fence, watching the flame change and shift, deepen and fade from the windows, until all was dark below, and the gold and purple lingered just a moment, as if with a parting benediction upon his own window in the gable, a voice sweet and strong came floating out to him from the porch, where a woman singing at her work, paused a moment in passing from the dairy to the kitchen. Roy caught the words of his mother's favorite hymn:

"'Though, like a wanderer,
Daylight all gone,
Darkness comes over me,
My rest a stone;
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to Thee!
Nearer to Thee!'"

"I wonder what does make mother sing that so much?" thought Roy, while Napoleon, hearing the voice, started on, hurrying the cows. "She's about as near God as anybody ever gets, any how, I reckon—and then she ain't a wanderer in the dark, with only a stone to rest on. But I like to hear her sing that, or anything else. There! she's got sight o' me," and straightening himself up on the fence,

he gave his straw hat a toss by way of salute, which was answered by a wave of a white hand and arm bared to the elbow.

Roy leaped from the fence, and whistling 'Bethany,' in quick time, started after Napoleon and the cows. Letting down the bars and then putting them up securely, he left Nap to take the cows to the yard, while he hastened to the house with the sweet melody of the hymn rendered by his mother's voice, and the glory of the sunset-lighted windows of his home, hidden away together in his heart, in a place from which they could never be dragged and destroyed, however much they might be covered and seemingly forgotten.

After supper, Roy helped his father with the milking, and then turned the cows out into the lower pasture. Through this pasture ran a brook, formed from the hillside spring that gushed from the rock near the dairy door. This was Roy's delight, and he lingered along its course a while, examining various wheels and bits of engineering that his boyish invention had contrived; things that his father laughed at, and that his mother understood and valued, and yet which made her sometimes sad, as she thought of the great world beyond the valley, and the sea beyond the river, to which these innocent, almost meaningless things of her boy's creation were indices.

Roy lingered until the shadows deepened after the twilight, and the summer stars came out slowly, and then he started homeward, whistling softly, while the fire flies lighted their tiny lamps and flitted here and there before him, as he walked, and leaped, and ran

Roy was a strong-limbed, large-brained boy. His black eyes were full of fire, and his heart full of enthusiasm; but his strength, and fire, and energy, were all tempered and held in abeyance by the gentle, controlling power of his worshipful love for his mother.

He found her sitting on the porch, with her face looking white in the twilight, as it was turned toward him. She had her apron drawn up over her head to protect her from the dew. He sat down on the step at her feet, and rested his arm on her knee, while she removed his hat and stroked back the dark rings of hair from his face, revealing a broad, massive brow.

"Did you see me to-night, sitting on the fence?" he asked, just for the sake of saying something to his mother, as she held his face in her hands, and was looking into his eyes in a way that made it necessary that something be said.

"That sunshine on the windows was splendid," he went on. "It looked like a flame; it always does, you know, when the sunset gets around to Sunset Hill. Mother, I'd like to see the country over there."

"Yes, my son," said his mother, "I suppose so."

"It must be beautiful, and grand," said the boy.

"It is great," replied his mother; "but one can only see a little at a time, just as we do here; the horizon always shuts one into a narrow space. But Roy," she said, after a moment's pause, "would you like to leave the old home, and father, and mother?"

"I would not like to leave home, and you and

father, that is, not for good," said Roy, caressing the hands that held him, "but I would like to go west, and see what it has for me, and then come back again. I wish sometimes that father'd sell the farm and we'd all go."

"No, my son," replied Mary Mason, "we shal never leave the home. You are a great strong boy, and perhaps one of these days will put on a pair of seven-leagued boots and walk off toward the place where the sunset light and shadow is stored for you; but when that time comes I want you to have it to remember, that the house is here with the same flame shifting over its windows, while father and mother are keeping your room ready for your return. I don't like to think of your ever going away from home, Roy; I wish you could love the farm, and work it as your father has done; it is such a safe life."

"I guess that's the trouble, mother," said Roy; "I love the place, and I don't think, after all, I should like you and father to leave it. I like it to be safe for you. I shall always want to remember you as, for instance, to-night, when you came out on the porch singing. You looked beautiful, mother. But I don't like the quiet of it; and there ain't enough to do for a great fellow all alive like I am. I've got splendid muscle, mother, and the world out there must have some use for it. And then I want to be rich, mother, and do something big, and there ain't room here; you know Horace Greeley said in the Tribune once: 'Go west, young man;' and I've thought he had his eye on me when he wrote that. I want to get rich quick, mother."

"The quick ways are not always honorable ways, my son," replied Mary Mason, still holding Roy's head.

"Some of them, of course, mother," rejoined Roy, "but some of them are just the same. I should never go into any of the bad, mean ways, you know that, mother; I hate meanness."

"I am sure of that, darling, but I cannot forget the words of the good Book: 'He that hasteth to be rich, hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.'"

"I should like to know why, mother?" said the boy, impatiently. "I am sure it's right to want to be rich; one can't get along without plenty of money in this world. Now look at father, pinched always, can't half work the farm because he hasn't money. I'd like to be rich to help him; and I don't see the harm in getting in a hurry about it, either. And why a fellow should be called 'evil-eyed,' and be made to come to poverty, because he does hurry up about it, I don't see. I always get in a muddle when you quote the Bible, mother."

Mrs. Mason found it useless to try to hold the restless head of the impatient boy longer, so she let go, and he arose and shook himself, as he sputtered out these words with a flavor of resentment in his tone:

"So much that I read in the papers, makes me want to do things that the Bible is always checking me for. I don't see into it."

"Well, my dear," replied his mother, "there are many things you cannot see just now, that you will

learn as the years pass; only hold your impatient spirit in check, and be content to learn and grow, according to rule, as other boys who have made men, had to do. Money goes but a small way in making a man, Roy. If you seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, you'll get the rest as fast as you know how to use it."

"But, mother," replied Roy, "I don't want to always be living on the edge of the jumping-off place, needing something that I can't get, work as hard as ever I can."

"Well, well, my darling," said his mother, catching hold of the hand he had thrust out in a most impulsive gesture, "many a man and woman have found that 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof;' and that real prosperity has grown only out of the black soil of disaster. You may have this lesson to learn by sharp experience, Roy. Salvation is the fruit of death; but I pray God to deal as gently with my boy as he can, and yet make a man of him; but I want him to do that at all hazards. Every hope and ambition for you, ends always by putting your life again into God's hands, and bidding him to do his work thoroughly, in and for you. I want no meddling of human or evil hands in the modelling of your soul, and if I am disappointed in everything else in life, I must not be disappointed in getting a true, noble man of God, out of my boy."

Roy felt the close clasp of his mother's hand as she held his, and he knew by the inflection of her voice, that there might be a hint of tears in her eyes. She did not shed tears, but sometimes they would come

in sight, and he could not bear them; so he threw his arm about her neck and kissed her cheek, saying, as he had learned from his father in his cunning baby days, and as he often said in tender playfulness:

"There pet,
Don't fret,"—

adding, "I'm going to be a good man, mother, if I am rich."

"Mary—Roy," called a pleasant bass voice from the room, and at the same instant a light was struck, and gleamed out from the window.

Roy took his mother's hands, and drew her to her feet, and they went in.

John Mason had just come in; he had been out later than usual, and hanging his hat on its peg by the kitchen door, he took the Bible from the stand, and Mary Mason seated herself at the old-fashioned organ, Roy standing beside her. John Mason turned to the ninety-first Psalm and read, slowly and with deep feeling, that grand hymn of assurance and faith; and his wife knew, by the fact that he had chosen this Psalm, that some burden had fallen upon her husband's heart, and that somewhere, during the day, he had found things a little rough and heavy. As he closed the book, she touched the keys, and began to sing again, Roy joining with a sweet alto, the hymn that had kept her company during her evening work.

"Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me;

Yet all my song shall be—
Nearer, my God, to thee!
Nearer to **thee!**

"Though, like a wanderer,
Daylight all gone,
Darkness come over me,
My rest a stone;
Yet in my dreams I'd be—
Nearer, my God, to thee!
Nearer to thee!

"There let the way appear,
Steps unto heaven;
All that thou sendest me,
In mercy given;
Angels to beckon me—
Nearer, my God, to thee!
Nearer to thee!"

Then, turning from the organ, she knelt and began to pray, for she knew that her husband always wanted her to pray when he read the ninety-first Psalm. She offered thanksgiving to God for the deliverances of the past, and asked that they might have grace to accept the dealings of God with them, and trust him, with the faith of children, for the future. The prayer was a very simple one, simply uttered, but it brought something fresh and sweet from the spirit of God to her heart, and that of her husband, while Roy wondered, as he had often done before. He was too full of the young animal yet, to quickly apprehend spiritual things. He was developing according to the wise natural laws of God, the animal in the first stages of growth, being in excess of the spirit. As the spirit is of the longer duration, it grows more slowly than the body that decays so soon, according to the same law which governs the com-

parative development and duration of the mushroom and the oak. The spirit often does not make itself really felt, until the body it inhabits is just ready to drop away from it into dust.

We must not be surprised or shocked, because our children, the strong, active, full-blooded ones, are so slow to learn the meaning of the truths grown precious to us, through the sharp lessons which experience has taught us.

"Now, father, what is it?" asked Mary Mason, as they arose from prayer, going to her husband's side, and laying her hand on his arm.

"Nothing that ought to have power to trouble me, Mary, when I think of our blessings; but you know how things are with us this year, and at my time of life, even the grasshopper may become a burden. I found Dolly dead in the pasture, as I came home to-night."

"Why, John!" cried Mary Mason, while Roy sprang quickly to his feet. "How could that have happened?"

"She cast herself into a sink-hole, some how; she hasn't been just sure-footed, since she sprained her ankle. She was stiff as a board when I found her. I hardly know how to lose her now, with haying at hand, and then she was a valuable beast for you, so kind and true; it made me heavy to see her lying there."

"Yes indeed, poor creature," said Mary Mason. "I shall hardly know what to do without her, myself.

"Where is she, father?" asked Roy, with sorrowful eagerness.

"Out in the new pasture; we'll have to bury her to-morrow, Roy."

"We shall miss Dolly, sadly," said Mary Mason; "but then, husband, just think how much worse it might have been. Here's this young colt here," and she laid her hand caressingly on her boy's shoulder, "what if he should get cast some day, in his wild career over the hills? You see, father, there is never anything so bad but it might be worse."

"That's so, wife; and I saw just such a sight to-day. I found Charley Wright, as I was coming home from town, lying drunk, with a bottle of whiskey beside him, alongside the road; and with the help of Mr. Knowlton, who was just behind me, we got him into my wagon, and I brought him home and left him with his mother. That was awful; but she, poor woman, has got so used to such things she didn't seem to mind. That was worse. But it's bad enough for us to lose Dolly. We will bury her in the morning, and trust in the Lord."

"I think I'll have a glass of wine, Mary, this has been a hard day;" and John Mason stepped to the sideboard, and poured out from the old-fashioned decanter, a glass of the home-made wine, for which his wife was noted, and drank it.

"Give me some," said Roy, who had followed, and stood beside him.

John Mason looked at his son a moment, saying:

"Rather late for you, ain't it, Roy?—past your bed-time, anyhow;" and pouring out a glass half full, he kissed him, and turned to his own room.

Roy drank the wine, sipping the last drop from the

glass, and went up-stairs. He kept thinking of his father's words, "We'll bury her in the morning, and trust in the Lord," and he thought it a strange association of ideas.

"That's a queer thing to trust in the Lord about," he thought. "I wish I was rich now, for just see what the death of a horse can do to a man like my father. Now there 's Mr. Marsden; what would he care if both those beautiful black horses he drives to church every Sunday, should die. He'd just take the money out of his bank, and buy another span, and think no more of it. I'll bet anything father 'll lie awake all night, and he'll have to scrimp and scrimp all the year to pay for another horse. Oh, dear, I do wish I was rich; I am in a hurry about it, there's no use denying it, and I never could just settle down on the farm, where, if a horse dies, everything is knocked endways for the next twelve months."

Roy had not taken a lamp, for the long summer twilight had not entirely faded; but undressing quickly, and laying his clothes in order on a chair, as his mother had taught him, he got into his neat, sweet bed, and lay waiting. Soon he heard his mother's step, and she came in, her face veiled by the dusk; but he knew just how she looked as she came toward him, and bending over his pillow, pressed her lips on his forehead and mouth.

Every night since he had slept in his own room alone, she had come to him in this way, and talked and prayed with him, and it had become a part of his daily life. She sat down on the bedside, and took

his hand, and then Roy asked the question that had been growing in his thought:

"Mother," he said, "you and father 'sought first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,' didn't you?"

"I hope so, Roy; why?"

"Oh, nothing much, only I was thinking how, instead of having 'all things added' to you, you are having a good many things subtracted. Every little while something happens to something, that makes father read that same Psalm, and you sing

'Nearer, my God, to Thee.'"

"Why, Roy, what a queer boy you are," said his mother, while she smiled in the dark at his strange way of putting a thought which had come to her again and again, until she had learned not to question.

"You have yet to learn, Roy," she said, "how God subtracts only the losses after all, and adds infinite gain. But you are only a boy, and we must wait for you to grow and learn. Good-night, my darling," and kissing him again, she went down-stairs, while Roy kept thinking, in a puzzled sort of way, until he dropped off into the dreamless sleep of youth and health.

CHAPTER II.

"WHAT is the first thing this morning, John?" asked Mary Mason, as the little family drew back from the breakfast-table.

"Well: the first thing is to get poor Dolly underground; then, I have some tinkering around the mower, one thing an' 'nother. Roy can come back to the house in a little while, and help you with the currants."

"Very well:—then we'll make a business of it this afternoon, and get them finished. I've got my work all out o' the way, so as to have the day clear. We'll pick to-day; and to-morrow make the jelly and wines."

"What makes you bother to make the wine, mother?" said Roy. "Walter Marsden told me last Sunday at Sunday-school, that they buy theirs. It's so much trouble for you to make it: buy it, and save your strength."

"Buy it, my son?" replied his mother. "You have but little idea of how much it would cost; and then our homemade wine is much better than any we could buy. It is pure: no alcohol in it. Bought-en wine makes folks drunk. Look at Charley

Wright, and the way he came home last night. That's what the boughten drink does. And then we never could afford to buy what we use; your father couldn't get along very well without it, and I guess you'd miss it, Roy."

"Yes, indeed, mother; I only thought of how much easier it would be for you. I don't think, any how, I should like any other as I do yours. I drank some whiskey the other day out of the jug they had at Mr. Wright's; but I didn't like it half as well as I do your wine; but I can help you lots, this year."

"Yes, indeed: and it will not be such a terrible job when we get at it: and you and mother work pretty well together." And she patted his cheek.

"Well, Roy, if you and mother have got that thing settled, we'll go;" said John Mason, who had been standing in the door way, smilingly regarding the two as they talked. And you would know by the light in his eye, that these two, the mother and the boy, were all the world to him; that from them every foot of land he owned, and his whole life received their value.

Roy kissed his mother, and he and his father, with Napoleon at their heels, went out to the new pasture, a piece of ground from which the trees had been but lately cleared, and which was very rough and abounded in pit-falls. And there, in one of the "sink-holes," with her head down in the pit, was the beautiful bay mare which they could so illy afford to lose.

John Mason was by no means a poor man. His farm was broad, and if brought up to its best, or if sold to the speculators, who had more than once

asked him for his price, would bring him a handsome fortune. But he would not sell it, for it was his birth-place. But it was a long distance from market, and he had never given it very generous culture, and had never dreamed of the wealth in the forest; so he went along from year to year, raising but little more in the fields than was required for home consumption, while the bulk of the farm was standing in its native dress of woodland, just as his father found it, and broke its solitudes, when he was a young man, more than seventy years before. He was perfectly content with the small dairy, and simple life of the small farmer; while the rich, dark wastes of the wooded solitudes climbed up the hill, and encroached upon the pastures and meadows, that smiled in the lap of the beautiful valley. But little money came into his hands, for he sold but little; although Mary Mason's butter and cheese were sought after in the market: and Mrs. Marsden, the wife of the wealthy banker and speculator, who had a summer residence down the river a few miles, thought she could never place any but the product of the Mason farm dairy on her table.

These things were the cause of the limited income of which Roy complained, and which chafed his ambitious nature; while Mary Mason, with a dim understanding of the truth, looked forward to the day when their son should bring out the hidden resources of the place, and make all things new, if he could but be made to love the farm, and its work.

"Dolly almost fell into her own grave," said Roy, as he stood a moment, with his spade on his shoulder

"Well, yes: that's a fact," replied his father "We'll only have to dig a little under her, and roll her down, and then throw the dirt from the top of the knoll over her. I suppose we could make her useful in her death by burying her in the manure heap; but I can't do that to Dolly: she must have a sweet grave, and not be hauled over again. She was a nice creature: poor thing. She hardly struggled. She was probably on the keen jump, exercising, and somehow missed her footing, foiled by her weak ankle. You may come around here, Roy, and dig under this shoulder, and I will dig here."

It was not a very long job, and soon her grave was made, and by prying under one side with a crowbar, Dolly was rolled, as gently as could be, into it, and covered with the light gravelly earth from the top of the knoll.

"Now we must look about for another horse," said Mr. Mason, as he smoothed the surface with his spade; "and contrive for the means to pay for it: sell off some cows and hogs."

"You might sell off part of the farm, father," suggested Roy: "Mr. Marsden, you know, wants it all."

"No, Roy. Mr. Marsden can't have the land but we'll manage, some how. Mr. Wright has a young horse that he wants to sell; probably I can make some kind of a trade."

Roy had stepped away a few paces, and stood looking toward the valley, when he suddenly exclaimed: "Father! see those men down on the flat."

"What of them, Roy?" asked his father, striking his spade on the gravel.

"Come and see;" said Roy. "I don't understand what they are about. They don't act like hunters. That ain't a gun they have: they don't belong here: there, they 've set the thing down, and one man runs off a ways; he's sticking something in the ground."

"Must be surveyors;" said John Mason, coming to Roy's side, and looking in the direction indicated. "But they are on our meadow; what are they surveying it for?" he questioned, in a tone which manifested somewhat of annoyance, for John Mason was sensitive about his farm.

"I guess I'll walk down that way, and see what they're up to. You can go up to the house and help your mother."

"I don't think mother needs me yet, father," said Roy, who found suddenly that he had lost interest in the plans for the day. He wanted to go, too, and see what those men were about. He had never seen a surveyor's instrument; had been out of the valley, and away from his native hills, but two or three times in his life; had seen but few people besides his neighbors, and those who gathered at the church Sundays, and he had all the curiosity that a wide-awake boy of fourteen could have. He was interested in the men, in the strange movements they made, the instruments they carried, and the wagon, covered at one end, that seemed to be in their company, and was waiting in the road in charge of a boy, who was holding the reins of a fine horse. So he exclaimed eagerly, "O say, father! let me go! I can run down there in less than no time, and see if they want anything, and then come back and tell you."

"Well, come on," said Mr. Mason, with a good-humored smile, for he had not quite forgotten his own boyhood; "you can go with me if you want to; but you must get back to mother before long, for she will want you."

So they shouldered their spades, and followed Napoleon down the hill; for even the dog had seemed to scent something of interest.

They crossed the meadow, to a place near the river, where the surveyors were carefully laying off the ground, and driving little stakes.

The man in charge of the instrument was taking an observation, and stood with his back to them, and did not see them, until Napoleon came to him, and began making the acquaintance of the handsome pointer that was nosing the sweet meadow turf, and jumping after butterflies. He spoke to the dog, and turning, he saw Mr. Mason and Roy, standing near, observing him. There was a question, and somewhat of dignity, in Mr. Mason's appearance, as the stranger met his eye; which led to a quick, keen, scrutinizing look, as he said:

"Good morning, sir; morning yet, I think;" and he looked at the sun.

"Good morning;" replied John Mason, stepping nearer. "You seem to have designs on my meadow, sir."

"You are the proprietor, then, sir?—own this farm?" remarked the stranger.

"Yes, sir:—I was born here,—it is mine."

"Indeed! born here? It's an unusual thing to

find a man of your age, in these days, living on the farm where he was born."

"Yes; but we do not come of rolling stock;" said John Mason, proudly. "I never had a wish to leave the old place."

"Well, I don't wonder;" said the surveyor. "It is a lovely spot,—magnificent;—I don't blame you, sir. But rather far from market."

"That depends, of course, upon your business;" said John Mason, with a genial light in his face, in response to the stranger's appreciation of his home.

"Yes, certainly; but I can see how a good home market would greatly accommodate these rich fields, and that wonderful forest."

"Yes; and I can see what it might be to be nearer the railroad," said John Mason: "but we can't move the farm,—don't wish to,—like it just as it is."

"You can't move the farm," replied the stranger; "but we can extend the lines of railroad, so as to meet you with the world's market right at your door."

"Ah!" exclaimed John Mason, looking at the instrument which stood with its shining disk and needle before him, while Roy took an eager step forward, and looked with wide eyes up into the face of the tall, handsome stranger.

"Yes, sir; that is just what we can do, and what we propose to do, with your leave. We are prospecting the route for a new railroad, a branch of the Great Central. It must go through this valley, and it looks to us now, as though we should have to pay you a good price for a slice off your meadow here, unless

you are public spirited enough to make us a donation. You've just the site here for the depot. This meadow, and the hill-side here, will be worth almost any amount, for city lots; and before you are much older, or this lad here adds an inch to his height, we'll roll the cars up to your corn-crib, and dairy door, and carry your lumber, to help build other cities, after you have supplied the home demand."

Mr. Mason stood like a man bewildered, while the talkative surveyor rattled on, portraying, with the license of his profession, the untold advantages that would follow the track of the steel rail, and the career of the iron horse through his native valley.

"Oh, father, wont that be just splendid!" exclaimed Roy; "a railroad and a city! Lots o' people and plenty o' money right here; 'twill be most as good as going West."

"I don't know, my son, whether it will be splendid or not," replied his father, slowly. "I must think about it."

"You like the plan, then, do you, young man?" asked the stranger.

"Guess I do!" replied Roy, stepping closer to the compass, and taking hold of the chain.

"And you've been thinking of going West, have you?"

"Yes: I've thought about it, lots."

"Where did you get the idea?" asked the surveyor.

"I don't know 'zactly. I read about in the Tribune. I've thought about it always when the sun shines on the windows, at night, from over there;

and lots o' things: I want to know what's there: and get rich."

"There you are, sir!" laughed the stranger, "Mr.—beg pardon sir, but I do not know your name:" and he lifted his hat politely to Mr. Mason.

"Mason, sir; John Mason is my name."

"And mine is Lawton, at your service: and this is my assistant, Mr. Briggs,—Willie Briggs," he added, as the man who had been setting stakes came up to the group.

"Well, as I was saying, here you have him; 'Young America,' just ready to put on his seven-leagued boots."

"Why, that's what mother said last night," said Roy.

"Then your mother knows about those boots, does she?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Doesn't want you to put them on, though, I'll bet a dollar."

"No-o-o, not yet;" said Roy.

"Well: I think I'd wait, if I were you, and see this fine town grow up out of the old meadow, and then you wont want to go west, for the west will come to you."

"Now, Mr. Mason," said Mr. Lawton, turning to him with frank sympathy in his tone, "I see how it is: this is all new to you: we had noticed the house, and were coming up, before long, to see if we could get dinner with you, and talk it over. We did not intend to take you by surprise, but it was you, sir, who surprised us. You will find the company

very fair and honorable in all their dealings, and whatever is done, will be with your full consent, and to your personal advantage.

"I don't wonder that it has bewildered you, sir," continued the adroit diplomat, "and any change to your quiet life, here on this sacred spot, must be attended with somewhat of pain. But it will be only the growing pains in the bones of a boy, after all; and you will be surprised at the prosperity that will come to you, and your children, on this railroad."

"This boy is the only one;" said John Mason, speaking for the first time in several minutes.

"Well, he's a fine fellow," said Mr. Lawton, "and you will make him a rich man without the necessity of gold hunting, or even going west."

"Well, Roy, what about mother and the currants?" said John Mason quietly, not seeming to notice the surveyor's words.

"That's so, father: I'll run right home."

"And tell your mother to get dinner for these gentlemen, my son: I'll go up to the upper pasture for a little while, and then come down to the house. And, stay, Roy; not a word of this railroad scheme to your mother: let us not startle her needlessly, wait for me; can you?"

"I'll try, father; but I'm afraid I shall let it out, unless I keep to the currants and don't talk."

"Well, well: it doesn't matter much; but I thought it might worry her, but I ought to know better. Nothing ever worries her."

"Then may I tell her? I always tell mother everything, so"

"I don't care: there, run on."

"That's a manly fellow, Mr. Mason," said Mr. Lawton. "I've one of my own about his age."

"Yes: and he's a good boy: full of life and notions. But his mother understands him wonderfully.

"Well, gentlemen," he continued, "we will make you as comfortable as possible at dinner-time. We have dinner at twelve o'clock. That your horse? Yes:—well, drive up and feed, or turn him out in the pasture, until you are ready to go."

"Thank you, Mr. Mason," said Mr. Lawton, "but we shall go up a ways further, and will keep the wagon alongside. But we will be on time, for this is hungry work."

Mr. Lawton took up the instruments, and Mr. Briggs took a handful of stakes from a box in the wagon, and they moved on; while John Mason turned and slowly ascended the hill. He did not go far, before he turned and sat down on a boulder, and let his eye range the beautiful valley that he had known, just as he now saw it, all his life. Scarcely a landmark had been changed. The same few farm-houses dotted the landscape. Some of them had, like Mr. Knowlton's across the river, been enlarged and modernized and some changes had been made among the people. The trees were somewhat heavier, cast broader shadows than they did fifty years ago; but whatever changes had come to people or things, had come about in the quiet natural processes of time and growth year by year a little, so that they were scarcely discernible to one who had looked on the scene every day, and had

been a part of it all. And now, as he sat and followed the course of the surveyors from his watch tower, he seemed to see with the vision of a prophet, the beautiful meadow lands of his own and adjacent farms, broken up into fragments, dotted here and there with houses, to build which his forests had been robbed. People were thronging the streets that ran parallel with the river, and along the whole length of the valley lay the glittering bands of steel, binding its peace and beauty to the strife and greed of the world beyond; while the lightning train came dashing down, and the heavy freights labored along the track, and the hills echoed and shivered through all their quiet dales, with the shrieks of the locomotive and the thunder of wheels. He had seen the transformation wrought by the public spirit called enterprise, along the borders of his own county, where the line of the great Central Railroad ran, and it seemed to him like vandalism. John Mason did not like new things, and sudden changes always produced pain in him. And yet he was disposed to reason, and thought. "Can I ever consent," he said to himself, "to have this thing on my meadow, that father and I cleared off so long ago? But then there will come some good things that will please Mary and the boy. There will be people, a church, a better school. The price of things will increase; there will be more money, as Roy said; and besides, it may quiet the boy's hankering after the west, and keep him at home."

And with these thoughts, something of the pain that had struck home at the prospect of all the

threatened innovations, passed away, and with a sober twilight gleam of Roy's enthusiasm, he turned down toward the house, thinking, as he walked with his spade on his shoulder, that he would talk it over with Mary before the strangers came to dinner.

He found Mary already busy with preparations for dinner. Roy was at the currant bushes, but when he saw his father coming he left his pail and ran to meet him.

"There now, father!" he exclaimed, "mother thinks it will be just as splendid as I do; she said she always thought some of the great improvements would come our way, some time: she did not seem a bit surprised."

"Then you wouldn't mind cutting the farm up, mother?" asked John Mason, as his wife met him at the door, standing beside him as he sat down upon the threshold.

"Why should we, John?" she replied, removing his hat and fanning him with it, for his face was warm. "There are acres and acres that do no one any good; they stand here, just as they did the day your father struck the first blow with his axe. There will be plenty of room for us, and the railroad, and all it brings: that's my way o' thinking."

"Yes, perhaps:" said John Mason, slowly. "But you wern't born here: this place can't be to you all it is to me;" and there was a tremor in his tone; for somehow it hurt him, that neither wife nor son should know of the pang that had thrust him through at the thought of change.

"And do you care so very much, John dear?"

asked his wife, stepping down and sitting by his side on the threshold.

"Of course I care," replied her husband. "I don't say it ain't for the best, and to our advantage, every way. I presume it is: but it can but hurt. This farm, the valley, the river, the hills, the forests, are all a part of me—of my life."

"Yes, John," said his wife, "I see how it is; and yet I do think you will enjoy the new and more stirring life that will come to us. I knew something about it, you know, before I came to teach the school over there, where you found me. I've been contented here, always, John; and I should be. It has been a very haven of peace and rest to me all these years. I love the farm, the valley, the quiet wilderness of hill and glen and forest all about us; but I do find that I like the idea of a little breaking up of the solitude, with the stir of business. Now, a railroad, with the breezy trains rushing by, and a cheery little village spreading out over the meadow there; a nice bridge across the river, and church spires, and people, and children, would add a wonderful charm to that landscape out there. But I couldn't bear to know that you were pained by it, John: that would be too bad. And then, may be they wont come here, after all. Railroad companies are uncertain things: at least, until the track is laid, and the depot built, and the trains running. They may go the other side of the hills entirely, and leave us to our quiet."

"Oh, mother!" cried Roy, "you don't think they

will, do you? That would be awful mean, if they should."

"We can't tell, my son, of course. I know one place where they even abandoned the route after the grading was almost done, and went along another line entirely. We must wait and see; and meanwhile be content and attend to our work: I to my dinner, and you—

"Yes, mother, I'm off: but I had to come and see about this."

So Roy went to his day-dream among the currant bushes, Mary Mason to the preparation of as good a dinner as she could bring from her stores, in honor of their guests, while John Mason went out to the shed where the mower was stored, and began its repair; looking out every now and then from the opening which fronted the valley, to watch the movements of the surveyors. He had to acknowledge to himself that, in spite of his personal dread of the change, he should be disappointed if the road should be carried around to the other side of the hills, and leave them alone.

Just a little before noon, John Mason saw the wagon with the two men, and boy, and dog, turning up the lane to the house. Roy and Napoleon had also seen them, and were hastening to meet them. Roy opened the gate for the horse, and as they drove in, Mr. Mason came forward and greeted them gravely, but cordially, and led the way to the stable. The two boys unhitched the horse, while the two dogs were exchanging mute greetings.

"This is a nice horse," said Roy, patting the neck

of the well-kept, intelligent traveller. "Father and I just buried a good mate for him this morning, out in the pasture."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Lawton, "how did that happen?"

"Got cast in a sink hole," replied John Mason. "She had a weak ankle. I found her dead last night. She was a beautiful bay mare; we all felt bad to lose her, I tell you: my wife could drive her anywhere. Roy and I were putting her out of sight, when we saw you this morning."

"Yes?—well, that's too bad. A nice horse is a prize; too bad to lose it that way. A gentle horse gets to be one of the family. I know how that goes; more like folks than brutes. I hate to see one hurt or killed. Have you talked with Mrs. Mason about our project?"

"The boy did that:" and John Mason looked around at Roy, who with his young guest was putting the horse in a stall, and giving him his feed.

"Yes, yes, I'll warrant:" laughed Mr. Lawton. "He was too enthusiastic to keep still. Well, Mr. Mason, I don't wonder you feel a little blue, but you'll see the bright side before long, I'm sure."

"Now, Mr. Lawton," said Willie Briggs, drawing off his coat, "I'm going to have a regular splash here in this trough; this is the wash-bowl for me."

"So say I;" said Mr. Lawton; and soon the whole party except Roy, who had been called by his mother, were applying the cool flowing water to their warm faces.

"A magnificent spring!" said Mr. Lawton, as he

stood with dripping face and hair, and took a towel which Roy had just brought from the house.

"Yes: this spring is a great blessing to us," said John Mason. "It has always flowed just like this'

And the men looking in the direction of his hand, as he indicated its course, noted how the great jet, that was thrown from a cleft in the rock with such wonderful force that it formed an arch to the ground, or rather the trough that received it, flowed away, and spread out into a bubbling brook, as it took its way through the garden, and meadow, and thence to the river.

"Magnificent!" again ejaculated Mr. Lawton. "Just the stream for a cheese factory."

"A cheese factory!" said John Mason: then after a moment, he added, with a stern firmness in his tone, "No sir: not here: I could never have that."

Mr. Lawton laughed quietly, and the party walked down to the house.

Mary Mason was waiting, with a neat dress, and large white apron, at the nicely arranged and well laden table. Mr. Mason introduced the strangers, whom she received with genuine hospitality, and interest as well.

"I hope you don't look upon us as intruders, or brigands, come to rob you of the quiet of your charming home, Mrs. Mason;" said Mr. Lawton, as he took the hand she had frankly extended.

"By no means, sir: that remains to be proven. I look upon you now as possibly tired and hungry; so please be seated at the table."

The dinner was a good one, and served with many

tokens of genuine refinement; and the hour passed in conversation, that opened a new world to Roy. Before they had finished he had about made up his mind to be a railroad engineer.

"Mrs. Mason brought out for her guests some of her best wine, and the old-fashioned decanter and glasses were placed on the table. Mr. Lawton looked at Willie Briggs, but he averted his face and looked off out of the open door, toward the orchard and the hill. The glasses were passed, and the wine was poured; and as Briggs took his, you might have noticed a slight paleness about his mouth, and a tremor of the hand.

"Mind your equations, Will," said Mr. Lawton, in a low tone, to which Willie Briggs replied by a mechanical smile, while his face wore a peculiar expression of painful greed, as he watched the wine flow, and saw the decanter pass. Mr. Lawton felt a sort of pitying contempt for the fellow, as he saw how he could hardly wait until the glasses were all filled; and then, as Mr. Lawton proposed the health of their hostess, and the future of the old farm, and drank his wine deliberately, praising its bouquet, he noticed with mortification that Briggs drank his like a regular wine-bibber, if not worse.

Willie Briggs noticed with pain that Mrs. Mason filled her son's glass, as well as her husband's; and a conflict of emotions seethed in his breast.

It was a very good-humored company that drew back from John Mason's table, and Mr. Lawton was in no haste; so the conversation flowed freely, and the wine was poured again. The two boys wandered

off with their dogs to the orchard, and followed the brook and talked about railroads and engines, as they examined Roy's water wheels, and dams, and boats. And when at length the time came for departure, it was with promises to return. Mr. Lawton promised Roy to certainly bring the railroad on their side of the hill, and to have the depot down by the river, in plain sight from the house, and to make him an engineer on the road, as soon as he would learn to run an engine; which Roy purposed doing on the shortest possible notice.

CHAPTER III.

THE railroad did pass through John Mason's farm. It was a much needed connection, and all possible expedition was made in the work of surveying, grading, and building. It was a very busy summer and autumn in the quiet valley, and the solitudes of the hills were broken by many unusual sounds. People were coming and going, and, as the work progressed, almost every farm-house became a hotel for the time. Mr Lawton often called, and Willie Briggs, to whom was intrusted the charge of the miners who were to grade along that portion of the route, made his headquarters at John Mason's, with his assistant.

Mr. Mason received more money for his lower meadow than he had ever had before in his life · although he sold it at a very low figure to the company, in consideration of the advantage the road would be to the entire estate. Mary Mason received the pay from her boarders promptly, so that things began to have a lifted up appearance all about the farm. A fine horse was bought and paid for, to take the place of the lamented Dolly, and Roy began to feel that the busy, prosperous West, about which he

had dreamed, had indeed come over Sunset Hill to meet him. The boy lived, in the intervals of school, a new and charmed life. The laborers, the stir, the changes of the landscape, caused by the cutting away here, and the filling up there, as the miners made the road-bed, were all sources of inspiration to him. He cared no more for his water-wheels: he had suddenly outgrown them. He had no time for reading any more; he even seemed to feel that the hours spent in school were lost: and as for the work on the farm, he had lost all relish for it. He wanted to join the laborers, and dig with spade, or drive teams, or lay ties, and he could talk of nothing but the wonderful miracle that was being wrought before his eyes. He liked nothing so well as following Willie Briggs, as he went about his work; and the two became the warmest friends.

There was something about Roy that Willie wanted with him. He admired his strength and force; and his tender love for his mother had wonderfully moved him, and served to make Roy as a continual monitor to him. Mary Mason noticed this, and did not discourage their intimacy, although she wondered that the man should so seek the boy.

John Mason was troubled as he saw how restless his son grew, and often spake of it to his wife. On one occasion, she said:

"It's all so new and strange to Roy. The novelty will wear off with by-and-by, and he will settle down to work. I know how it is. I feel it myself. why, I can hardly work sometimes. I run to the window, or door, a hundred times a day, just to get a glimpse

of the activity. If I were a boy, I should be running after it, as Roy is."

"Yes, I know," said John Mason; "but I've been afraid he'd hear things that would do him no good. Some of those men are very rough. Now there's that set at Wright's. I wouldn't have them about my house. And Billy is with them so much, and Roy and Billy are such friends."

"Yes," said Mrs. Mason, "I realize all that; but Roy can't be chained up like Napoleon, to keep him from harm; we must do the best we can to meet the world that is at our door, with the strength of God; and leave the result with Him."

Mrs. Mason took especial pains with Roy, in the bed-time hour, during these days. He always left his lamp burning for his mother to take down, and as she sat at his bedside, many and earnest were the talks they had about the new order of things, and the world's ways, bad as well as good; and fervent and tender were the prayers that she offered beside his bed, in his hearing, as well as in her secret place of prayer, during that busy transition period. Talks and prayers they were, that he never forgot.

The room occupied by Willie Briggs, and his associate, James Watson, was separated from Roy's, by only a thin partition; and the voice of the mother, tender and sweet, would penetrate to their ears often; and Willie Briggs became so interested, that he would start for his room when Roy went up-stairs, and would sit and drink in the tone of converse and prayer with a hunger that God only could know, or under-

stand. Once he said to Watson, as he heard Mrs Mason leave Roy's room and go down stairs:

"I'd give worlds, if I had my mother back again."

"Where is she?—dead?" asked Watson, bluntly.

"Oh! yes—she's dead," said Willie Briggs, bitterly; and he pulled the sheet over his head, and no one knew the tears that wet his pillow; and he said to himself, with a strange energy: "If I can ever keep Roy from going wrong, and breaking his mother's heart, I'm going to do it: if she did tempt me with her wine. I don't understand it. Roy is a splendid fellow: but he's bound to give her trouble: I'll keep him in sight, for my mother's sake."

One Saturday morning, Roy obtained permission to spend the day with Briggs. So, with Napoleon at his heels, he went to the point where they were at work. In grading the road-bed, they had come to a spur of the hill, about half-a-mile from the Mason farm, that was thrown directly across the line marked by the survey. The hill came so near the river, that there was no getting round it; and the road must either cross the river on a long bridge, or the spur must be cut away. It had been decided to adopt the latter course; and Briggs was superintending this work.

On the day in question, as the laborers were cutting, mining, and clearing away the earth, having reached pretty well down to the required level, Roy made a discovery.

He was standing near a heap of freshly deposited earth, and he picked up a lump of hard, black, polished substance, and, passing it to Briggs, said.

"What do you call that, Will?"

"That?—why, that's so!—that's coal!"

"And look!" exclaimed Watson, as another load was dumped on the heap, "there's more of it." And stepping to the point which was being cut away, he cried:

"Why, the hill is full of it!—just look at the wall there!"

Just then a miner with a pick, struck out a large lump of pure carbon, and with an exclamation of surprise, dropped the tool; and lifting the fragment in both hands, called the attention of the men to the discovery.

Work was suspended for a few moments, and speculation was rife among them, concerning the unknown resources of the region.

Roy was alive with enthusiasm. He was the discoverer; and dreams of untold wealth began to float through his brain.

The coal discovery was the topic of conversation in every farm-house, among men, women, and children, all through the country. In a few days the papers were full of it; and, in a few more, fortune-hunters, speculators, and scientists were exploring the hills and valleys, and the day of seclusion was gone forever, as it seemed to John Mason. And while his wife felt the new sensation to be an added pleasure, and Roy was like a young enthusiast, John wearied of it all from the first, and grew a little surly to the strangers whom he met everywhere, and tried to create about himself an atmosphere that should, in

some degree, serve to shut him in to a place of his own, and shut out the encroaching world.

Mary Mason was troubled about these things in her husband, and tried to brighten him up, and compel him to greet the world that had sat down at their doors, with some degree of fellowship. But the man was completely upset in all his ways, and work; and with every fresh innovation, and every new comer, his confusion grew; and, as a result, he settled back into himself, with a sort of dogged purpose not to be moved or pushed further.

When speculators came bringing a letter from Mr. Marsden, who was organizing companies for developing the resources of the region, asking that they be allowed to prospect for coal on his farm, he gave the most positive denial.

"I will not have a spade or pick struck into a foot of my land," he said; "have it all cut up with shafts, and dug out under me, so that I shall own only a shell! I will not have the foundations touched."

He was asked again and again, by Mr. Marsden and others, to name a price for his farm; and at length he came to meet all such advances as he would an invasion; and refused to even talk about it. He said to his wife, one day, after he had been unusually annoyed:

"They ask me to sell,—sell,—sell! I will not sell! This is the one sacred spot to me; the graves of my father and mother, brother and sister, are here. Shall I sell them? Never! You know how it was, Mary, when you came into the district to teach. I was then forty-five years old, and had taken care of

father, until he died; and then of mother, until you came just in time to help me make her last year bright, and we buried her beside the others. That was eighteen years ago. I never thought I was getting old, until all this noise, and hurry, and change came. But now I find that I am. I am an old man, Mary. I can't stand this, as you and Roy do. Tell everybody to let me alone about the farm. They must let it alone until I am gone; then, when Roy has it, if he does not care to keep it as it is, I shan't know about, or be troubled by the changes. Only, I hope they won't go to digging through the graves of my dead, or mine, for this coal they talk so much about, and are so wild over."

"Well, John, dear," replied his wife, taking his head in her arms, noticing, for the first time, how his hair had whitened in the last few months, "after this, when anybody comes to talk with you about these things, send them to me: I'll settle it with them, and you shall be left in peace."

So it came to be understood that John Mason would not sell off another foot of his farm, at any price; and that he must be left alone about it. Mr. Marsden was very much vexed with the old man, and blamed him for holding on to so much valuable land, that was doing no good to any one; and he began to lay plans by which to gain his object, at all hazards.

But, meanwhile, although the work of development and transformation went on around them, or rather below them, with astonishing rapidity, the farm-house and its occupants gradually settled down

to comparative quiet, again; and John Mason found, back in the forest, the old solitudes unchanged; and here he found again the peace, and rest of soul that had been so disturbed for a time; and became again the genial, friendly spirit of other days, although more subject to moods, Mary Mason thought; but she did not know how the growing power of the decanter, on the sideboard, contributed to this.

CHAPTER IV.

THE rail-road was completed in due time The depot was built down by the river, as Mr. Lawton had promised; and the town began to gather about it. Coal mines were opened, and rows of houses were builded for the miners. Cottages of all shapes and sizes sprang up on the old meadow, and Mr. Marsden, who concluded to look after his mining interests in person, built a beautiful residence in the new town of Masonville, to which he brought his family. A church was built by the coal proprietors, John Mason giving the ground; and the old country church, four miles distant, was left to the occupation of the few farmers, who still clung to the old house, and were not friendly to the new. A large and commodious school-house was erected, to accommodate the increase in the junior population, and many new faces appeared on the old play-ground.

Roy found himself indeed in a new world. The rushing trains, the unloading of freights, the coming of strangers from the depot, the erection of buildings, the stores, the shops, the hotel, all interested and enthused his quick young heart, and sometimes it seemed

as if the boy would almost fly, in his abundance of life and energy. His especial delight was the locomotive; and his eagerness to be really a part of that thing of life and power, could hardly be controlled. It might have been better, if John Mason had understood this spirit in his son, and if his ambition had been gratified; but who can tell?

Mr. Lawton often called, as business brought him to Masonville; and on one of these visits, the conversation turned on Roy, as he and John Mason sat together in the sitting-room, by the open wood fire.

"What are you going to make of the boy?" asked Mr. Lawton.

"Well,—I confess I am at a loss, Mr. Lawton," replied Mr. Mason.

"Let him study engineering," said his friend. "Roy has it in him to make a grand man on the road."

"O, I can't think o' that," replied John Mason. "Too much risk and danger; too many bad men in that sort o' business; too many temptations. You understand I mean no hurt by that, Lawton; but you know rail-road men have the name of"—

"O yes, I understand;" said Mr. Lawton, hastily. "In one sense you are right; there is great exposure, of course; but life on the road gives a man a good chance to prove what kind of material there is in him. I think Roy would weather it, and be a good man there: he was born to it; anybody can see that."

"There must be some other way for him to spend

his energy," said John Mason. "He is all we have, and we can't have him going off anywhere. He must stay by, and be the support and comfort of our old age, some how."

"I sincerely hope he may," replied Mr. Lawton, "and I believe he will, if he is judiciously managed; but he must find a legitimate channel for his energy. Pardon me, Mr. Mason, but I am interested in the boy; and I am reminded of my own boyhood in observing him; and I sincerely hope you will not antagonize that which is a growing passion in him. He knows every engineer on the road already, and is already conversant with the construction of the engine, to a degree remarkable in a boy of his opportunities. And I have made up my mind to say to you, that I stand ready to give the boy a good start, any time, when you will say the word."

Mr. Mason had flushed hotly for a moment, at the words which seemed almost like a warning, but had quieted his rising spirit, and replied:

"Your words are kindly meant, Mr. Lawton, and I take them in the same way. I must do the best I can for the boy, but he is all I have."

"And he is worth a dozen ordinary boys," said Mr. Lawton; "a splendid fellow, Mr. Mason; as near my ideal as a boy can come very well; large, well-formed, tender, brave, true-hearted, with fire enough in his black eyes to kindle even my cool nature every time I look at him. You have reason to be choice of him, but he must be led into the right way, for if he takes a wrong turn, gets into bad ways, he would be like an engine on the wrong track, or off the track

altogether, plowing up ruin wherever he should strike."

"I realize this, Mr. Lawton," replied Mr. Mason, "and I fear the life you propose for him. I want him to stay on the farm, but he never did like it, and his mother and I have often talked lately about what we would have him do."

"Let him have a voice in this decision, Mr. Mason, I beg of you. But for the fact that my father was the most judicious of men, I should have gone to ruin. I am not the man I ought to be now, but might have made a complete wreck. My father was a minister, and he did desire me to follow in his steps, I suppose, as earnestly as a father ever did. But he saw that I could not; I was not cut out for it; and so, one day, when I was home from college, for vacation, he took me into his study, and we had a long talk together. He had been informed of some of my wild ways, and he told me this frankly; and then he told me of all he had hoped, but that he saw I was not called to be a preacher, at least he had doubts about it; and he asked me what I would like to do and be. I told him how I had longed to be a civil engineer, but that I had said nothing to him about it, for I knew he wanted me to be something else; and I tell you, Mr. Mason, the manner in which my father did for me after that talk, made me love his profession, and believe in his religion, in spite of all the unbelief I had learned, and in spite of my own sinful life, for I acknowledge I am an ungodly man, and yet I revere the faith of my father and mother. One thing father said that day, has always stayed by

me. He said, "I want you to do and be what the Lord wants you to do and be, and I believe the Lord calls engineers as well as ministers."

"Who said that, Mr. Lawton?" exclaimed Roy, who had just come from school and entered the room in time to hear the last words.

"Why, how do you do, Roy?" said Mr. Lawton, extending his hand, which the boy grasped.

"Tip-top; but say, who was it said that the Lord calls engineers as well as ministers?"

"My father, sir," replied Mr. Lawton, smiling as he still held the stout fist in his hand.

"Was your father an engineer?" asked Roy.

"No; why do you suppose that?" And there was a merry twinkle in Mr Lawton's eyes.

"Because he said that; but was he? He couldn't have been a minister?"

"Yes, sir, he was a minister, and a grand one, too," replied Mr. Lawton.

"Well, that is funny; I never would have thought that. Father, do you think like Mr. Lawton's father did?"

"Yes, my son, of course it is true," said John Mason, although he could but feel a little disturbed at this turn of the conversation.

"Oh, I'm awful glad," cried Roy, tossing his hat to the ceiling two or three times, "for I can't be a minister, of course; don't want to be a farmer, and I do want to be an engineer;" and he ran out of the room to answer a call from his mother. He soon returned with a little tray, on which were two glasses, a little silver cup, and a bottle of currant wine, and

some delicate cake, which he deposited on the stand beside his father and Mr. Lawton, with his mother's compliments, and a request that Mr. Lawton remain to tea. Roy filled the glasses and passed to the gentlemen; and then pouring some wine into the cup, he said, "I haven't outgrown my baby cup yet, Mr. Lawton. I most always drink out of it yet; have had it ever since I was named."

Mr. Lawton sipped his wine and broke his cake, looking at Roy the while, as he did the same, and he thought, "I wish Roy never had had wine in that cup; yet may be it will do no harm to him, with his surroundings, if he doesn't get to anything stronger."

He had noticed the freedom with which Roy had helped himself to cider and wine, and he was familiar enough with their nature, to know that care should be taken in their use, and that moderation was the rule for even himself; and his experience with Willie Briggs, had led him to watch a young man with somewhat of anxiety, when he held the wine glass. His own son, about Roy's age, and his wife, were not supposed to even know that he ever used anything stronger than coffee; and he would have been shocked to have seen his boy filling a glass for himself, with even Mary Mason's home-made wine.

That night, when Mrs. Mason entered Roy's room, he greeted her with the question that had been vexing his brain all the evening, and indeed for some time past.

"Mother," he cried, "what is father going to make of me? Mr. Brayton asked me the other day, when

I was helping them get settled, and I couldn't tel him; do you know, mother?"

"Why, Roy, are you in such a hurry to know?" said his mother, smiling at his eager face, as she seated herself on the bed-side.

"Yes, I am in an awful hurry to know," said Roy. "I asked father the other day, but he only laughed, and asked me what I was good for; and I'm sure I don't know; only I know what I'd like to be made good for. I've got plenty of stuff in me for something; just see, mother, what an arm that is; just feel of my muscle;" and he bared his arm to the shoulder, and closing his fist tightly, revealed as finely developed muscle as any boy could boast.

"Yes, my son," said his mother, putting her hand over the hard ridges on his arm, that lay under her clasp like iron, "yes, here is good material, to be turned to some holy use."

"Of course," said Roy, "I've got heaps to learn before I can be it."

"What, my dear?" said his mother.

"Why, an engineer, of course," said Roy; "and I've been thinking, since father and Mr. Lawton were talking this afternoon, that maybe father was getting ready for me to begin somewhere."

"What makes you think that, Roy?" asked Mrs. Mason, soberly.

"Why, Mr. Lawton was saying to father that his father—and he was a minister, mother—said to him, that he believed the Lord called engineers as well as ministers; and when I asked father if he thought so

too, he said he supposed he did. So I thought they must have been talking about me."

"Perhaps they were, darling."

"Well, mother, do you believe that the Lord calls engineers?"

"Certainly, dear, I believe he calls men and women into every kind of work and business that is right. God owns all the raw material of the universe, and all forces and powers are subject to him; and he intended, no doubt, that all these things should be handled and controlled by good men and women, with consecrated hands, doing his work everywhere, on the farm, in the kitchen, in the school-house, the church, the court, the stores, on the rail-road, in the mines, and wherever anything is to be done. He has a place and work for every man and woman, and if we only belong to him, and will live for him, and be obedient, he will bring every one to the right place and work, in the very time when we shall be able to do the best and most perfect work for ourselves, as well as for him."

"Does everybody find their place, mother?" asked Roy.

"No, my darling, there are a great many things that interfere with us, and stop us on the way, as you have been stopped sometimes on your way home from school, of late, so that we get to the place where God wants us, behind time, and some never get there at all. Sometimes we hinder ourselves, by taking things into our own hands, and thus interfering with God's good way for us. Then we fail, utterly fail, and I don't want this ever to be said of my boy."

"I don't want to fail, mother; I want to do just what I am called to do," said Roy, thoughtfully. "And if I find anything that would try to stop me on the way to God's place for me, I'll keep right on, and say, 'I've no time to lag; I've got some great, grand thing to do and be, and I must hurry up and be on time.' But say, mother, if you and father knew that the Lord had called me to run one of his engines, would you let me go?"

"Certainly, my son," said Mary Mason, "we'd let you do anything, or go anywhere; be a missionary to the Fee Jee Islands, if the Lord called you."

"I don't want to be a missionary, mother," said Roy; "but say, how does anybody know they are called to anything?"

"In ways that they will recognize and understand," said Mrs. Mason; "different ways to different people. There will be an inward feeling, called a 'conviction of duty,' and there will be a consciousness of some sort of fitness for the work. People are always called to make the most of themselves possible, under the circumstances, and submit with patience to things they can't help, and"—

"Well, mother," interrupted Roy, "I have a 'consciousness of fitness,' as you say, for running an engine, or making one; I feel it in my bones, as father says about the storm coming. I have all the inward feelings necessary, so I guess the Lord has called me to that sort o' work; don't you think so?"

"I can't tell, my son, what I think about it. We must pray about it a good deal, and try and find out the right."

Mrs. Mason knelt, dropping her hand on Roy's cheek, as he lay with his face turned toward her, and thus she prayed that her boy might be led safely, by the unerring counsel of God, so that he should find the very work for which he was designed, and that he might be prepared to do that work, to the glory of God, whether it should be on the farm or on the railroad, or wherever it might be; that, above all, they might be able to know fully the will of the Lord, and be saved from 'leaning unto their own understandings;' and that God would work out his own will, in spite of their foolish desires, or their unhallowed purposes, mistakes, or sins.

After the prayer, Mary Mason kissed Roy, and left him to sweet and dreamless sleep, while she went to the sitting-room, where her husband and Mr. Lawton, who had returned to spend the time until the night train, were engaged in conversation over their hot cider, and with the decanter of wine between them. John Mason was just saying:

"Yes, I take it hot on an evening like this. I feel this little cold snap a good deal. I think I took cold on the hill to-day. I was chopping, and had my wampus off, and got sweaty, and was so warm I started home without it;—left it hanging on a tree; hadn't hardly got used to carrying it yet this fall; but the cold wind took me when I got out of the woods, and then I missed it, and I got real chilly before I got home."

"Yes, it's pretty cold to-day," said Mr. Lawton, "but a mug of this hot cider with a pepper pod in it,

will fix your cold. Mrs. Mason, you brew the best wine and draw the best cider I ever find."

"We take a great deal of pains with it," said Mrs. Mason. "But, John dear," she said, taking a bottle from the sideboard, "If you have taken cold I'd better make you a brandy sling, good and strong."

"All right, wife; you know what's good for a fellow;" and John Mason leaned back in his arm-chair, and watched his wife as she prepared the mixture.

"One thing I want to say to you, Mr. Lawton," she said, as she compounded, and stirred, and sipped. "You know how Roy's mind runs out over the tracks of the rail-road. Now I have an especial reason for asking that you will not keep this idea of being an engineer in his mind; never again allude to it, if you can help it, before him."

"I will certainly respect your wish, Mrs. Mason," replied Mr. Lawton.

"Thank you; and then, John," she continued to her husband, "above all things, you and I must not shut him away from our confidence, with this wild idea in his head. He must talk to us all he pleases about it, and we must let him feel that this matter interests us. In fact anything that concerns him concerns me; the fact that my boy thinks of anything, makes that thing of importance to me, and I must know the inside of that thought. He must talk to us about any and every thing, about which he would talk to any one. I would almost as soon see him die as go on to the rail-road, yet we must not oppose him."

"Yes, wife, I understand," said John Mason; "we

will prevent it by politic methods if we can; but I should have to be made over, before I could consent to such a thing, in any event. The train almost always makes me shiver when it comes swooping down the valley—I wouldn't get on to it for anything—and I sometimes think this whole business is bound to cost us pretty dear."

"That depends on how we take it, John," replied his wife, mildly.

"Well, all right. Is the sling ready? Thank you—splendid!—'s hot and good;—just the thing for one's cold." And Mr. Mason sat sipping the scalding brandy and water, while Mr. Lawton drank his wine slowly, as he talked, holding it occasionally towards the light, to admire its color.

"They don't pour anything like this at Monroe," he said, as he thus held the glass to the light.

"No: that's so," replied Mr. Mason. "Yet they have a very good assortment; a very nice place; and Mr. Monroe seems very much of a gentleman: paid very liberally towards furnishing the church."

"Yes?" said Mr. Lawton, with a question in his tone; "very nice fellow, that Monroe,—for a saloon."

"But," said John Mason, "I'm sorry to see such a place as that of Diffenbaum's:—a regular dram-shop. I was talking with Mr. Knowlton to-day about it, and he said we ought somehow to prevent having any more such places; and Monroe thinks so too. We were in there,—Knowlton had sold him a cask of wine, and wanted me to try it;—Mr. Monroe is really doing a very nice thing by the farmers, in buy-

ing their wine and cider, and they were all saying that the dram-shops are a nuisance. The miners crowd into Diffenbaum's, and it gets pretty noisy, they say."

"Yes," said Mr. Lawton, "the dram-shop fiend is pretty sure to smell a miner's camp, East or West, and get into it somehow. You can't help that very well: why, you just ought to see some towns in the West, and even along the line of our own rail-roads. Saloons almost every other door; you may consider yourselves well off if you have but two, here in Masonville. But then, although the saloon is a great nuisance, it need make no difference to respectable people, after all. There is a class of people who will make beasts of themselves; they always have, and always will; and they may better do it in the saloons, than in the hotels, where ladies are often annoyed by the noise of the bar-room."

"Charley Wright spends most of his time there, at Diffenbaum's, Mary;" said Mr. Mason, "and the young man—Harry—brought him home himself the other night."

"Well," rejoined Mary Mason, who had been slicing a pippin as she listened, "you know, John, he used to spend his time at Cooperstown before: and as Diffenbaum's is but one mile, and Cooperstown ten, there is something to be thankful for. But I do think it is dreadful, how that boy does go. But they say he always did love whiskey and brandy,—was born to it. I suppose there is no help for him,—but it must be dreadful for his mother, especially if she is conscious of blame."

So these people sat and talked over the steaming cider, and the blood-red wine, made by the hands of the loving, tender, Christian woman, little dreaming that coiled in the very glasses in their hands, was the viper of the same deadly species as that which thrusts his poisonous fangs into the soul of the habitués of the lowest groggery in the land. John and Mary Mason were utterly oblivious to the fact, that this same wine and cider, from the orchard and garden of the old farm, with all its sacred associations, held in solution a power that was able to nullify all the pure teachings of that home; prevent the answer to all that mother's prayers, blight all that father's hopes, and make of the quiet sleeper in that consecrated chamber, a man of sin, and sorrow, and shame.

"Mary, aren't you going to have a glass of wine with us? or did you drink so much cider in the cellar, that you have no room left?" asked John Mason.

"No, I did not drink any cider. You know I don't take much of anything, but I will have a drop of the wine." And as Mary Mason took the glass from her husband's hand, she did not know that there was in it a demon, that was manifested thus, that he might destroy the best work of the best home that heaven ever consecrated; aye more: that he might destroy the noblest work of God himself. She did not know that there would come a time, when she would look back to this day, from the desolate land that rum has peopled with his victims, clasping her hands in unutterable anguish, with the very bitterness of death flowing in a steady current through her heart, from this sealed fountain of ignorance.

The unknown poison will work its work of death, just as surely as that which bears the mark of cross bones and skull.

It may seem strange and incongruous to many, in this day, that a woman like Mary Mason, should have placed the wine-glass on the stand near which she sat, so that its stained rim touched the clasp of the book of God's word, and no thought should enter her brain of the lack of harmony between the two. She was a strong, brave, true-hearted Christian woman; doing her work for God in her home, and desiring in her soul nothing so much as that the work of God, in discipline, in all culture and training, should be done in her and hers. And yet she cherished that which antagonized every interest of both God and her home, and her own life and peace as well.

It is a great mystery how this could be, and yet it is a story from life, and which is being repeated again, as I write: the sowing of tares in the garden of the Lord while his husbandmen slept; the hiding of the scorpion's egg in the nest of the dove, while she covered it in innocent unconsciousness of harm. O, it is the same sad, sad tale, told over again every day.

After Mr. Lawton took his leave, John Mason and his wife sat by the fire for some time in silence. At last he said:

"I tell you what it is, Mary, it is a terrible thing to have a boy like that one up-stairs to bring up. Do you know, he seems like a being of some other mold entirely from me. He surprises me every day, with revelations of things I never dreamed of. He must have got more from you than from me, he is

such a stranger to me. He's quiet enough now: but sometimes I am fairly startled at his quickness: and I get so tired with his energy. I suppose it's because I'm getting old. You ought to just see him chop once. If I knew he'd always stick to that sort of exercise, I'd feel easy enough, though."

"Well, John," said Mary Mason, "we must do the best we can with him, and"—

"Yes," interrupted John Mason, "we must do the best we can, and trust him with the Lord. I feel that way about him to-night, but sometimes I feel more like taking a good stout rope and tying him up."

"We can't tie him up, John. I feel anxious, often, but this I know, he was given to God before he was born, and I am so sure of God that I know that whatever mistakes we make, our heavenly Father, knowing our purpose to bring up a man for him, will honor our trust, and show us our boy, some time, with his own name written on his forehead. I wish Roy were more quick to take in spiritual truth. I am impatient often, to have him become an honest, intelligent Christian: but yet I can wait. I know it may take the Lord a good while to make a man out of the material we have given him, and he may have to resort to processes that we cannot understand, but I believe he can, and will do it. I am led to this by my own experiences of life. Roy has in him the elements, beginnings, rudiments, of many grand and noble things in manhood. He seems to me often like the index page of an encyclopedia: and I confess, John, I am waiting with a great deal of interest, to know what will be written in the book."

CHAPTER V.

THE Masons had some near neighbors,—the Rev. Martin Luther Brayton and his family—and, for the first time, John and Mary Mason had a pastor.

The minister who had preached in the little country church, which stood four miles down the valley, had lived in the village, which was still as far again beyond; and it was only on rare occasions,—a funeral or a wedding,—or once in years a pastoral visit, that they met, except in the regular service of the house of worship; and they did appreciate the presence and company of the genial man, who had come to the pastorate of the church in the little new town. Mr. Brayton had been called to Masonville, at the instance of Mr. Marsden, the banker and speculator, who was presumed by some to be the chief man of the young city, and who, with his wife, two sons and a daughter, were always at church Sabbath morning, and who had taken the superintendence of the Sunday-school as well.

Mr. Mason had given the ground for the parsonage, as well as the church, from a piece quite near his own house; and had a real pride in the little cot-

tage, that had been built, and to which the minister came, and in which they helped him to settle his family. Roy carried almost the entire library, himself, from the big box on the porch to its berth on the study shelves.

Mr. Brayton was a man past middle life; of kind and genial aspect. His wife was a bright, matronly lady, some years his junior; graceful in her ways, and very much of a home body. Their eldest son, Frederick, a lad of seventeen, was a studious boy, preparing for college with his father; and the younger, Archer, about Roy's age, was a fine, good-hearted boy, with a dash of recklessness, but with a very affectionate nature, and devotedly attached to his little sister. Mabel was a beautiful child, with sweet and winsome ways; who, from being the household pet, soon became the favorite of the neighborhood.

The young Braytons and Roy soon became warm friends. Their coming had brought something into the boy's life that he had seemed always to have missed; and they were, in turn, delighted with the bold, strong, and noble-spirited young fellow, who seemed sometimes more like an untamed colt than anything else; and then again was as gentle and thoughtful of others as a girl could be. The Braytons had brought with them a breeze from another world, and were in return introduced to scenes new and entrancing. Roy knew all the ins and outs of all the coves and dells; all the ups and downs of all the hills and valleys; and the winding ways of all the brooks and footpaths for miles around. He knew

where the largest meadow strawberries ripened, and where the chestnuts waited their coming; and many were the long and delightful rambles they had during the first autumn after the Braytons came.

Mabel Brayton became Roy's especial friend. She was a remarkable child: small and very delicate, even to frailty, in appearance; yet full to the brim of vivacity and life; looking three or four years younger than her age, which was just about thirteen when Roy first saw her. He had never had a girl friend. Somehow his idea of girls had been exceedingly crude. He reverenced them because his mother had been one once, but otherwise he disliked them, that is, those whom he had seen at the district school, and the church. He thought the race must have degenerated, 'or something;' for the girls whom he knew were so different from all that he thought his mother could have been, that until Mabel came he had always looked with chagrin on pinafores and sun-bonnets, and had thought often that the world would never see another woman like his mother; but Mabel,—well, Roy began to see the world in a new light from the day she stepped out of the door of the new parsonage before him; and he thought she was very like what his mother must have been. Roy worshipped her with open-hearted frankness, that was the source of much amusement to those who observed them together, especially Frederick and Archer.

One Saturday afternoon in the Indian summer, the three boys were at work together over their fishing tackle on the porch, while Mabel sat near in the open

door, with her patchwork in her hand, and her doll in a little chair beside her; and Roy, looking at her with admiration in every feature, startled every one into a laugh by exclaiming:

"I wish Mabel belonged to our house."

He did not know why the boys laughed, and he did not care; he had simply spoken the honest truth; he felt that he needed Mabel, and with all his heart he wished she was his sister.

"Well, Roy," said Mrs. Brayton kindly, smiling more at the indifference with which he received the laugh, than at his remark: "Mabel will have to belong to this house because God sent her here; but then you and she can be friends, you know, and you must come over here as often as your mother thinks best."

"And Mabel must come over to my house," replied Roy.

"Yes, sometimes, when your mother would like her," said Mrs. Brayton.

"Oh, mother would like her all the time," said Roy; "but maybe you think we ought to have a girl of our own." And the boys laughed again.

"I think it would be very nice if you had a sister of Mabel's age," said Mrs. Brayton; "nice for you, and Mabel too."

"Yes, indeed," said Mabel, as she spread out her block on her knee, and looked at it with her head on one side. "But I don't know, after all," she continued. "I like Roy as well as if he were a girl. I'll go over to your house and bring my doll some day,

Roy, and make you a visit, just as if I were your sister."

Roy looked at her, and then at the doll; and while he had but little confidence in the latter, yet he found room in his heart to be willing to entertain even that incomprehensible bit of girl's frippery, if he could have Mabel. He looked at her a moment, without replying; then suddenly he broke out with the bold question:

"Say, Mrs. Brayton, why can't Mabel go fishing with us this afternoon?"

"Why?" exclaimed Frederick sharply, "because she's a girl—that's why. We don't want a girl tagging."

"I do," said Roy, "if that's what you call it."

"I'd like to have her go, first rate," said Archie, "if she can keep up."

"If she can't keep up with us, we can keep back with her," said Roy, stoutly. "I tell you if she was my little sister she'd go where I did."

"That's 'cause you never had a sister," said Frederick; "'distance lends enchantment,' you know. Girls are nice enough in their place, but otherwise they are an awful bother."

Roy looked the indignation he felt, especially when Mabel turned eagerly to her mother and asked:

"Can't I go, mamma?"

"Oh, no, my child," replied her mother, "as Frederick says, you can't follow those great strong boys with your little feet all this afternoon; you would get tired out."

"No, I wouldn't, mamma," pleaded the little girl,

"and I'm spry, if I am little, and I know I could keep up."

"Mother, don't let her go;" said Frederick, petulantly, adding, "Roy, I should think you would know better than to get her teasing to go."

"You need not fret, my son," said Mrs. Brayton, in a low, earnest tone; "I have no intention of letting her go. I fear I could not trust your brotherly care."

"You can trust me, mamma," said Archie.

"And me," said Roy.

"Thank you, boys," replied Mrs. Brayton, "but Mabel must stay at home to-day. We must plan something, however, for next Saturday, that can take her in: and she stooped and kissed the little face that was beginning to look grieved, adding, "Brother Fred doesn't mean to be cross, pet, I know; but it would be a hard jaunt for you."

"Of course it would, mother," said Frederick. "We'll be tired as dogs ourselves when we get home. We'll get up something for next Saturday."

"What will it be, mamma?" asked Mabel, not noticing her brother's remark.

"We'll talk it over with Mrs. Mason, and the boys, and see," replied Mrs. Brayton.

"Then I guess it will be something nice," said Mabel, taking up her needle again, and sewing in silence; while she wished that somehow Frederick could belong to Mr. Mason's house, and Roy to theirs; for then she was quite sure, she would not so constantly be reminded that she was nothing but a girl.

She had often heard the truth from her father, that

women had a sphere;—and she thought that was all right. But, when Frederick, with the assumption of his seventeen years, tried to impress upon her, that she, because she was a girl, had no right to share the active sports of her brothers, she resented it with all the spirit of the woman that was growing within her:—and she was glad, more than she could express, to find so brave and manly a champion of her cause, in Roy Mason.

The next Saturday, according to the plan that developed, a little nutting excursion was made by the two families, into a lovely glen that nestled between the hills. It was a charming spot; hidden from the eye or foot of the profane speculator, and which had been a favorite resort to Roy and his mother. There were magnificent trees:—pines, hemlocks, beeches, hickory, butternut, and chestnut, all along the edge of the precipitous walls; and at the mouth of the glen, was a famous butternut, which yielded its annual harvest for Roy's gathering. A brook, that knew the secret of that glen's formation, and still held in its dark, but shallow depths, seedlings of the old-time power, and which was a resort for trout, was waiting the visit of the boy it knew so well, and his dainty little friend. The trailing arbutus here hung every spring time her garlands of snowy sweetness;—here the winter-green strung her necklace of rubies, and the crinkle-root hoarded her spicy stores. The most timid wood creatures here sported in perfect safety;—and here the shadows found a safe retreat from the lances of the noontide sun, under the dark ledges that overhung the abyss below.

These ledges had for Roy an especial charm; for now and then, one would break from its fastenings, and fall with a deep intonation to the bed of the brook, and fret its waters into making much complaint. He had himself seen this, and he knew of others that were loosened, and was watching for them to find their level below.

It was a beautiful Indian summer day, and it was a good season for nuts; and the enjoyment of the whole party could not have been more fully assured. They walked through the forest, the two mothers together, conversing, and watching the children. Mabel was Roy's especial charge, assisted by Napoleon, who had evidently adopted her into the family. Roy was happy as a king, as he carried her basket with his own, and waited to help her over the rough places. She was such a tiny creature, that she seemed to need a great deal of help; yet, she was so full of spirit, that she always managed to take care of herself. She would get the start of Roy's chivalrous intent every time, and clamber over the boulders and fallen tree trunks so quickly, that he was left behind: then she would turn and laugh, such a clear bird-like note, and spring on, leaving him to overtake her as best he could.

"Talk about Mabel keeping up," he said to Archer once, as she sped on before him, followed by the dog. "We better talk about our being able to keep up with her. I believe her feet have wings."

Frederick and Archer carried the lunch baskets, which it was intended to fill with nuts for the return. Mr. Brayton had a shawl-strap with blankets, and a

book which he hoped to read, and another in which Mrs. Brayton intended laying leaves and ferns, to be pressed for home decoration. Mr. Mason had gone up the hill with the horse and light wagon, and was to come to the place of rendezvous, at the table rock and dine with them, and take home the nuts, as well as the ladies, if they wished to ride.

When they reached the big butternut at the mouth of the glen, the elders rested a while, and watched the children and dog, as they made a raid on the nuts; but soon Mr. and Mrs. Brayton strolled on into the glen, and Mary Mason and Frederick, who carried the baskets for her, went in search of the broad flat table-like rock, where she had spread many a lunch before.

"Capital!" exclaimed Frederick. "This is just the place:—won't it be jolly?—and it's made me awful hungry to carry this basket, Mrs. Mason," and he began lifting the covers.

"Well, sir," said Mrs. Mason, "I suppose if you are a hungry tramp, you must be fed; but I wonder if I had not better send you to earn your dinner, as the other children are doing?"

"If you call me a child," said Fred, loftily, "I'd like to know where you'll find your men."

"Prove your manhood, and we'll believe in it, sir," retorted Mary Mason, laughingly. "It takes more than a shadow of a mustache to make a man. Take hold of this table cloth and help me set this lunch, and I may believe in you;" and she gave the scarlet cloth a flirt at him. He caught it quickly, and drew it down smoothly over the rock, and then proceeded

to set out bottles, and packages, containing, as he said, "all things eatable and drinkable."

"Really, Mrs. Mason," he said, "I am too hungry to work," and he began to help himself with laughing meddlesomeness.

"Well, then I will leave everything else and serve you. I will give you a cookie, and a drink of cider, or wine, as you prefer, and then you must go."

"I never take cider when I can get wine," said Frederick.

So Mary Mason poured him a glass of blackberry wine, and the boy took it, and sitting on a stone near by, dipped his cookie into the liquor and bit it off.

"This is splendid, Mrs. Mason," he said; "did you make this wine?"

"O yes, Roy and I—he always helps me; this is three years old. I brought out some of my best in honor of the occasion."

"That was very nice in you. Father will appreciate it, I know. Say, Mrs. Mason, have you met Mr. and Mrs. Windham, the other minister?"

"No, not yet. I propose calling."

"Well, they were at our house to return mamma and papa's call, the other day; and you remember the cider you sent us, and the wine? Well, father told me to go and bring some of the cider. I did so, and when I offered Mrs. Windham a glass, she declined, and so did her husband. Then papa said:

"'Perhaps you would prefer a glass of wine, some of Mrs. Mason's domestic brand.' And Mrs. Windham, with a bright flush on her cheeks, said: 'It is a matter of principle which led me to decline the cider; we

take nothing intoxicating.' Father looked angry for a moment, but of course politeness would not allow him to reply: but the interview had to be shortened after that."

"Well," said Mary Mason, "Mrs. Windham did not probably understand, or she would not have said that. She meant all right, for I suppose they are excellent people. She did not know that we always prepare our cider, so that it does not get very hard, and that our wine is just the purest juice of the fruit; currant, gooseberry, or blackberry, or from the grapes we grow. I make it from grapes for communion: and know that there is no alcohol in it. Some wine makes folks drunk; but this is perfectly harmless and wholesome, and she did not know it; that is the only trouble."

"Well," said the boy, placing the empty glass on the table, "she needn't have been so radical about it. It wasn't polite, to say the least, and I know my father didn't like it. But I think I can work now, so I'll go." And he took up the basket.

"See where father and mother have got to," he cried, as he looked up: "they are clear up into the glen. Father—and mother too, for that matter—is a great explorer. This is a beautiful spot." And the boy lifted his eyes to the strip of blue sky, dotted with fleeces of cloud, that was spread over the narrow space between the high walls of the glen, and stood with his head bared, drinking in the sweet scene. A shout from Roy, who was in the top of the butternut, recalled him, and he hastened to the scene of activity.

The hour from then till noon, was a noisy one, and busy, with the children. The nuts were abundant, and the baskets were soon filled; and then, after a moment's consultation, they decided to make a heap, and load into the wagon when it came. And this they did; Frederick and Archer using one basket, and Roy, Mabel, and Napoleon the other. Mabel laughed her musical laugh almost constantly, to see the antics of the dog. He would paw the nuts with his feet, as if gathering them in a heap together, and take them in his mouth and carry to the pile. And when every now and then she would stop to pull his long silken ears, and pat his fat sides, he would lick her hand, and bark with delight.

Mabel got tired of gathering nuts, after a while, however, and then amused herself with pelting the boys. But, at length, with a chirrup to the dog, she ran up to the place where Mrs. Mason was keeping guard over the lunch table.

"O, what a nice table!" she cried; "and what a nice place! I never saw anything so beautiful; but where is my mamma and papa?"

"They went up the glen: we will call them to lunch soon."

"I'll run and find them," she said; then, as Napoleon gave a bound and made a dash through the undergrowth and up the hill, she cried:

"See Nap—what is he at?"

"He sees a rabbit or a squirrel. He's a great dog to hunt on his own account," replied Mrs. Mason.

"Well, I hope he won't catch the dear little squirrels in his big mouth," said the child, and started off

with a jump and a skip, over the causeway formed of broken ledges, along the bed of the brooklet, that chattered and murmured to itself, as it came out of its sleepy hollow under the hill, and passed on toward the activities of life that had awakened the valley, and begun to turn even the beautiful river to account, among the wheels of the manufactories and mills, that were springing up along its banks.

Mrs. Mason thought, after the child had gotten out of sight, that it was a pretty rough way for her to travel alone, and wished she had called and sent Roy with her; but she thought Mr. and Mrs. Brayton could not have gone so very far, and that Mabel would find them; so she was quite at rest about her.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. MASON drove up the mouth of the Glen about noon, and the boys began loading in the nuts; and their voices rang up and wakened the echoes, as they shouted and sang at their work. But the "gong," as Frederick called it, broke in upon their merriment with no unwelcome sound, as Mary Mason drummed on a tin pail with a stone, to announce to all who might hear that lunch was ready; and at the signal the boys dropped their baskets and ran pell-mell to the table.

Mr. and Mrs. Brayton had not yet returned; and so Roy took the "gong" up into the Glen a little farther, and pounded and shouted.

"Hallo there!" answered a voice at length, from far above, and a shower of pine cones and hemlock burrs came down upon his head. He looked up, and there on a ledge, more than a hundred feet above, stood Mr. Brayton, as on a watch tower. It was a dizzy height. Mrs. Brayton's head was just visible over the edge, as she clung to a sapling, and leaned over, one foot on the solid ground, while the other just touched the ledge; but Mr. Brayton stood boldly on the very edge, with as much ease and self-

possession as though he had been in his pulpit. Suddenly Roy's face grew deadly pale, and with horror in his eyes he shouted, with a wild gesture:

"Back, back! The ledge will fall!"

He remembered this ledge as one that he had noticed as sinking slowly, and now he could see the earth crumbling on its under side; and at the same instant Mr. Brayton felt it move beneath him, and recoiled backward; but seeing that he could not thus save himself, he threw up his hands, and caught the branch of a tree, just as the ledge, its hold upon its fastenings broken, fell with a crash and deep intonation to the bed of the stream, breaking into a thousand fragments.

Mrs. Brayton had been saved by her firm hold of the sapling; and as she saw the peril, sprang back on to solid ground. But her husband's position was one of extreme danger. He had a good hold on the branch of the tree, but how to get from it to the ground in safety, was a question; for it grew on the side of the almost perpendicular wall, and there seemed no possibility of obtaining a foothold, if he should descend from the tree. He looked up and saw that his wife was safe, and a deep feeling of thanksgiving for this much of deliverance, came into his heart.

The crash, and Roy's exclamation of horror, had brought the whole company to the spot: and a word of explanation, the sight of Mr. Brayton clinging to the tree, and the still crumbling earth, together with the white, distressed face of Mrs. Brayton as she looked over into what seemed to her the chasm of death, revealed the situation; and they began to

look about for the quickest means of ascent. Roy knew well the path by which they must have climbed, but it was a long way, and the nearest approach with the wagon was still farther.

"What can we do? Something must be done to get father off from there," cried Frederick, measuring the wall of the glen with his eye.

"Father, father!" cried Archie, in a tone of agony.

"Yes, my son, I hear you," replied his father's voice, dropping down through the air thin and weak.

"Can you hold on a while, sir?" shouted John Mason.

"I think so," was the reply.

"If he can, father, we can get the long ladder and drop it to the foot of the tree, and he can get from it to the cow-path on the terrace. I know just how to do it. I'll tell you, father: you drive around just as fast as you can to Mr. Wright's, that's nearer than our house, and get his long ladder, and a rope, and you can get back in a few minutes, if you hurry: and the boys and I will go around the terrace way: and you can drop the ladder down to us, and we will get it to him."

This plan was approved, and Mr. Mason, with Archie, who was to help him, started down to the butternut tree, where the horse was hitched, and Frederick and Roy ran up the glen, to a place where a well worn cow-path came down from the high-land above, taking advantage of a natural terrace that lay in a semi-spiral form along the side, leading from the bed of the stream to the high pasture land of the Mason farm. It was a narrow way, but safe enough,

and just the path to entice the steps of the lover of the hills. At some points it lay open and bare, in full sight from the glen; and at others it was completely hidden by the heavy growth of trees and brush; and in one place it was shut in by a solid wall of stone on either side. The boys, however, did not stop to notice the wildly romantic beauty of the scene, but climbed as swiftly as the steep ascent would allow; and in a short time came to the point which was but a few feet from the place, and just below where Mr. Brayton hung, yet too far for him to reach footing.

"You see how we will do, Fred," said Roy.

"Yes: that will work, if we can get hold of the ladder all right, as your father lowers it."

"We must do that," replied Roy; and then he explained to Mr. Brayton, asking:

"Can you hold on a little while longer?"

"I think so: though I am getting very tired." Then looking up, Mr. Brayton answered his wife's agonized inquiries and suggestions by a statement of the plan.

"Shout to father, Mrs. Brayton," called Roy, "so he can find you quick." And she obeyed, and in a little while they had the satisfaction of knowing that help was at hand.

A rope was fastened to both ends of the ladder, Archie holding one and Mr. Mason the other; and thus it was successfully lowered to the boys; and they, taking the lower rope as it came to them, dropped the ladder down to the foot of the tree in which Mr. Brayton hung, and then, holding the top firmly against the terrace, Roy called out:

"All right, sir! Now come down the tree, and then climb the ladder to us."

Mr. Brayton began the unusual exercise of crawling to the tree trunk, and then dropping from branch to branch, downward, until the lowest branch was reached; and there yet remained some distance to the bottom, against which the ladder rested.

"I am almost afraid to drop," he said to the boys, who were anxiously watching him. "I'm older than I used to be."

"I guess you'll have to, father," said Fred.

"There's no other way," said Roy. "I guess you'll make it all right."

"What if he shouldn't, Roy?" gasped Fred.

"But there isn't any shouldn't about it," said Roy. "He will! but say, Fred, let us pray for him."

"All right," sobbed Fred. "Oh father, don't miss; you'll be killed if you do."

It was with hearts almost breaking that the party so strangely divided, watched the careful preparations for the 'drop.' Mrs. Brayton, Archer, and John Mason from above;—Roy and Frederick from the terrace, and Mary Mason from the glen, where she waited alone.

Mr. Brayton got himself in position, and then letting himself down as far as possible with his arms, he let go, and came down heavily in the curve of the tree trunk, where it turned like the instep of a human foot, as it grew up to the light. In his fall, the ladder was thrown from its position, and, but for the fact that Roy was holding it firmly by the rope, as well as by the top rung, it would have gone down to the

bottom of the glen. It was however replaced, and Mr. Brayton began the ascent, and was soon clasped in his son's arms, and with him went up the path to the summit, where he was received as one raised from the dead.

Mr. Brayton was much shaken by the accident, and looked really ill;—but his wife was hardly able to contain her joy at the deliverance.

Mary Mason went about the work of gathering up the lunch, and repacking in the baskets, as soon as she saw Mr. Brayton safely with Fred; when suddenly she thought about Mabel.

"Where is that child!" she cried. Then she thought "probably she is with her mother,—strange though, that she hasn't made a sound all this time." She looked up, and saw that Roy was coming to her; having dropped the ladder by the long rope to the bottom.

"Where do you suppose Mabel is?" she asked. "Is she with her mother?" and she told him how she had gone up the glen to find them.

"Probably she is with her, then," said Roy; "but I can soon tell. Father will take Mr. and Mrs. Brayton in the wagon, and then return for you and the things. I will run to the place where the road comes out, and see. You wait here, it'll not take me long."

So Roy leaped away. He was gone some little time; and when he returned, with Napoleon at his heels, it was to say that Mabel was not with them.

"I saw father," he said, "and gave him the word, but didn't say anything to alarm the rest; for you know, mother, there ain't any real danger to the little

thing. She's gone into the glen, and then in trying to come back has strayed off into the east branch, and will be dreadfully frightened;—but I can find her well enough. Father will come back after he takes them home."

"I will go with you," said Mary Mason. And when John Mason had deposited his load at the parsonage, he turned and drove back with all speed, and tying his horse at the butternut tree again, started up the glen to join his wife and son in the search for the little girl.

CHAPTER VII.

LITTLE Mabel got a glimpse of the native solitudes that day, and an idea of silence and loneliness, such as she had never before experienced or dreamed.

She walked on into the glen, singing softly to herself, as she felt the solemn hush of the everlasting silences about her; and two or three times she called her father: but as he did not answer, after she had gone some distance, she thought she must have missed them, and started to return. Instead of taking the path by which she entered, she strayed unconsciously, as Roy had intimated to his mother, into the other branch, known as the east glen, which wound round among the hills for miles, and came out at the other side of the range, in another valley, a long distance to the eastward from Masonville.

Mabel was a brave, thoughtful child; and when she discovered that she had lost her way, she sat down on a stone and began to think what she should do She did not cry, although a strange sickening feeling of utter loneliness, such as she had never known, came over her as she sensed the solitude, broken only by the sounds of the forest. and the gurgle of the brook,

as it trod its dainty way over the slaty path it had been for ages cutting for itself out of the mountain fastnesses.

The tall hemlocks stood in majestic stillness against the sky, as she looked up to the heights above; and the leaves of the beeches and maples came floating slowly down in their brilliant autumn plumage, dropping into the bubbling current which bore them away; or falling on the stony ground, where they were destined to lie until their beauty had departed, and they were sodden and dissolved into the mould of the earth, as the leafy generations before them had been, furnishing food for the curious growth of this conservatory of nature, which had become her retreat in her most quiet moods.

At first Mabel did not notice these things. She only thought of how she should find her way back: but as she thought, she said to herself:

"I know they will find me if I keep still here, and don't get too far off. Roy knows the way all through here; he said he did, and he'll show papa, and they will come after me when they find I don't come to lunch. "I suppose they are having a great time with the nuts yet;—or maybe they have missed me and so are hunting for me, just now. They will call me, so I must keep still, so's to hear them."

So she sat very still, straining her ears to catch the lightest sound of a step or voice, and while thus sitting, motionless as the stone on which she sat, a squirrel came running almost to her feet; and then, erecting himself on his haunches, he sat with his tail thrown up over his back, looking at her with his

funny round eyes. He held one little paw up, in an attitude of one demanding attention, while the other was dropped in the most gracefully languid position. He looked so cunning and queer, that Mabel laughed a gurgling little laugh, in spite of herself. Mr. Squirrel gave her one quick look of surprise, and then, with a haughty flourish of his tail, skipped away and ran up a tree. When he was safe among the branches, he turned and eyed the intruder curiously, from behind a tuft of scarlet maple leaves; and as Mabel caught his eyes again, she clapped her hands and laughed a merry ringing laugh, that awakened the echoes, and startled all the timid creatures of the wilderness, and even seemed to make the leaves flutter as they came floating down through the gorge.

"I wonder how it would seem to be a squirrel, and live here always?" she said. "I think I should like it. How would you like it, Mister Bright Eyes, to have me change into a squirrel and live with you in in your hollow tree?"

"Is your hollow tree pretty nice for a home, you pretty, pretty creature?—and how is your wife and babies?" And she laughed again, a clear ringing laugh, which floated along the glen, and repeated itself in a thousand merry tones among the echoes.

She caught the sound of the echo, and began to quiz it. She laughed, and called, repeating the names of her father, and mother, and brothers, and Roy: laughing as the wierd creature, which is only a voice, tossed back to her the very tones, with strangest mimicry.

In this way she passed considerable time; then

beginning to tire of sitting, she arose and walked about. She also began to feel the loneliness again, and to wish her papa and Roy would hurry up about finding her.

As she walked along she found a great vine, with a natural seat, formed from its twisted branches, and lambered into it and sat waiting.

"I think I'll sing again," she said. "I'll sing and sing as loud as I can, and maybe they will hear me."

So she began to sing for a purpose. She only knew the sacred songs of the church and Sabbath-school, and even the echoes were awed into something like solemnity, as they were compelled to repeat the strains of St. Martyn, Old Hundred, Ortonville and Sessions. She sang:

"There is a fountain filled with blood,"

and,

"Come thou Fount of every blessing,"

and there came positive comfort to the little heart that was growing heavy, as she chanted the words:

"'Jesus sought me, when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God:
He to rescue me from danger,
Interposed his precious blood.'"

and she thought,

"He will find me soon, I know he will."

"By a natural association of thought she began to sing.

"Nearer, my God, to Thee;"

and it was the familiar notes of his mother's hymn, sung by the little lost child, that greeted Roy's ears,

as with Napoleon he came out to the branch known as the east glen. The dog had been leading Roy, and now, as he heard the child's voice, he bounded forward, while Roy halted a moment and listened.

"Darkness comes over me,
My rest a stone,"

sang the voice: and a strange feeling came into the heart of the boy. A lump filled his throat, and there was a pressure of unwonted tears back of his eyes. He pressed his hand to his brow, and swallowed hard, and with a seriousness new and strange in his heart he started after the dog and toward the voice.

"That's the queerest thing I ever heard of," he mused. "Yet it's natural for anybody lost in a place like this. Poor little thing—shouldn't think she'd feel like singing, but she's plucky, I'll bet anything."

His meditations were broken by a glad cry:

"Oh, Nappy! you dear dog, did you come to find me?" And running forward, Roy found her with the dog in her arms, laughing on his neck. She looked up as she heard Roy's step; and when she saw him, she left the dog and sprang to meet him, throwing her arms about his neck, and kissing his cheek as though he had been one of her brothers.

"Oh, Roy," she cried, "I knew you would come, but I got so lonesome and tired waiting." Roy felt a strange glow on his cheek. He had never been kissed before except by his father and mother, and the touch of the grateful innocent lips of the little girl, who had come so sweetly into his life, seemed to go clear down into his heart; and with it came a

sense of strength and manliness, such as he had not known before.

"Of course I would come," he replied; "you must be tired, and lonesome, and hungry too; but we'll soon get you home now, wont we Nappy?" And the dog jumped on to his master, and licked his face, and then thrust his nose into the little hand that he had learned to love almost as much as he loved Roy.

The children started home, hand in hand, Napoleon leading the way with a consciousness of the important part he had played in the adventure, manifest in even the wag of his tail, and the expression of his tongue, as it lay out on one side of his open jaws, giving the appearance of dignified gladness to his noble canine face.

"Mother is waiting for you out here a little way," said Roy. "She came with me as far as the fork of the glen, and said she would wait there, for you might come out from some of the little nooks around, and so we might miss you, if she did not stay. We knew you must be either in the East or West Glen. You couldn't get lost, really, unless you should try to climb out, and I didn't think you'd do that."

"No: I knew you'd be coming, so I thought I'd keep right there, for I've heard how children wander, and wander, and make it so hard for anybody to find them. I always thought I'd never do that when I got lost."

"Why," laughed Roy, "did you expect to get lost?"

"I didn't know but I might sometimes, like child-

ren I have read about," replied Mabel. "But where is my papa? I thought he'd come."

"He doesn't know yet that you were lost;" and Roy told her the story of the afternoon's experience of danger and deliverance. The child listened with flushed face and dilating eyes, and quickened her pace, as her heart sprang forward toward the loved ones whom she felt she had almost lost.

"Oh, Roy!" she exclaimed, bursting into tears, "just think, I would never have seen my papa again! I should have been dreadfully lost, wouldn't I, without any papa! Oh, I am so glad, and sorry, too: let's hurry, Roy. I want to see how papa looks."

The children made as much haste as the rough way permitted, and found Mrs. Mason waiting for them, as Roy had said. She took the little girl in her arms and kissed the tear-stained face, and the little party moved on.

When they came to the scene of the accident, they stopped, and talked it all over again, pointing out to Mabel the place from which the rock broke, and the track of its descent; and then they examined the fragments, as they were scattered in the brook, and along the entire breadth of the glen. The great mass of the stone fell across the stream, and had already made itself known to the impeded channel; and the waters were picking their way around, and creeping under the best they could; complaining of the cold dark barrier thrown across their patiently worn track to the river. A good deal of rubbish from the hillside marked the place; broken branches

of trees, and stones, with the fresh earth scattered everywhere.

As they were observing and speaking of these things, John Mason came in sight.

"Hello! All here? lost found?" he exclaimed. "Well, all right! we've got to the end of our adventure, I hope."

"This is a strange ending of our picnic," said Mary Mason. "But we have great reason to be glad, if we have been fearfully frightened."

"I should say as much," rejoined her husband. "Nobody is hurt seriously, but we have been where we got a look at death. Do you know?—Roy only just escaped being hit by that stone when it fell."

"John!" cried Mary Mason, while she grew deadly pale, and Roy stepped one side, and began computing with his eye.

"Yes: I noticed that the first thing," continued John Mason.

"That's so," said Roy, "but I never thought of it. I was standing right here."

"Yes," said his father. "That great stone just missed you; and the small stones and earth fell in a shower about you,—your hat is covered now. Thank God that you are safe, instead of being ground under that stone, as you might have been.—Mary, I only just begin to realize what we have escaped."

"Yes,—we have great reason to be thankful, indeed," said Mary Mason. "You have been saved, my darling, from a cruel death,—saved for a purpose, I doubt not."

"And this little one found for a purpose, I pre

sume:—eh?" said John Mason, pinching the plump cheek, that had lost its rose-bloom, however.

"What, crying?" he added, as he saw the tears. "Well, I don't wonder." And he turned quickly away, and catching at Napoleon's ears, said: "Well, we'll all be ready for dinner,—let's get to the wagon, and I'll get you home in a jiffy."

"But Mabel didn't cry, I know," said Roy, proudly, "until I told her about her father. She was singing up in East Glen, and that helped Nappy and I to find her." Napoleon gave a little quick bark, as he heard his name, and ran back and caressed the child's hand, while Roy said, aside to his mother:

"Mother, Mabel was singing your old hymn."

Mary Mason looked down at the little figure that was walking by her side, and smiled on her with a look that held the child's eyes a moment, while she wondered a little.

"Then you are a brave little girl, are you, Mabel?" asked John Mason, who was walking ahead, playing with the dog, who had again gone to his side.

"No, I guess not," said Mabel; "but I knew I would be found. I knew Roy would come, and I thought papa would come too; I didn't know about —" And again the tears came and choked her voice, and she sobbed: "O, I want to get home quick now, please."

"All right;" and there was a tremor in John Mason's tone. "Napoleon, why don't you hurry up this dog team, old fellow? – Come; you must make better time than this." And he pulled his long ears, and jumped, and gesticulated until the dog seemed to

get his meaning, and jumped, and barked, leaping forward as if on the chase, for a few steps; then wheeling, he darted back to Mabel, and leaped on and caressed her, until she laughed again.

They soon came to the butternut tree, where the horse was hitched.

"Guess we'll remember when we gathered these nuts," said Roy.

"You children don't want to stop to gather the rest, I suppose?" said Mr. Mason, as he assisted his wife to the wagon seat. "I'll come back in an hour or so, if you do."

"O, no, no, please!" cried Mabel, running close to the wagon.

"Never mind him now, dear," said Mrs. Mason. "He's only trying to be funny;—he wouldn't leave you for a wagon load of nuts."

"O—o—o" sighed Mabel.

"Just hear her talk," said John Mason, lifting Mabel in his strong arms, and placing her safely in the wagon, beside his wife.

"I didn't know you ever tried to be funny, or play tricks, Mr. Mason," said the child, as he and Roy climbed into the wagon, and Roy started up the horse.

"I don't often," he said, "but it will make me try, most any time, to see a woman or little girl cry;" and he brushed his hand over his eyes again.

"Well, I think you are a funny man, then," said Mabel.

"Yes, indeed! you don't begin to know," he replied. "Now, if my wife here should begin to cry, I

should as likely as not, deliberately stop this horse, and get out of the wagon and turn a somersault."

"Why, Mr. Mason, how funny you would look," laughed Mabel.

"I should hope so:—that's what I should intend; I always want to be as funny as possible, when I begin; and I always want to break up the crying business in the start."

They had quite a lively ride home, in spite of the sober events of the day. Mr. Mason's heart was so full of 'tear lumps,' as he thought it all over, that he had to 'keep something going to keep straight himself.'

He drove to the barn, and lifting Mabel down and kissing her, bade Roy run home with her to her mother; he would not trust himself to be in sight when they met; and as soon as he was left alone, he poured out his heart, full of tearful praise to God; while in the parsonage the whole adventure was being lived over again, by the family gathered about the couch on which Mr. Brayton rested, with Mabel clasped in his arms.

CHAPTER VIII.

IT was a few days before the Communion Sabbath, in Mr. Brayton's church. He was sitting in his study, preparing for this occasion, when a caller was announced.

"Whom is it?" he asked of the girl.

"A boy, with something for you."

"Well, send him up;" and in a moment a large faced, but rather handsome boy of sixteen or seventeen entered, and handed a package to the minister, saying:

"With father's compliments:—for the church."

"Your father is"—

"Mr. Monroe, sir,—I am Jimmie Monroe."

"O, yes: will you be seated?"

"No sir, thank you. Father said you gave out that it was communion next Sunday, and he sent you a bottle of wine, with his compliments."

"All right! tell your father I thank him heartily for this token of good will to the church."

"Yes, sir,—good-day;" and Jimmie Monroe hastened down the stairs, for he had an engagement with Claude and Egbert Marsden, that made him in haste.

"Well, now; I call that neighborly," said Mr. Brayton; "but of course I must see Mrs. Mason first. She always provides the wine, and has for so many years. I would not offend her for the world: neither do I want to offend or seem to slight Mr. Monroe."

So that evening, after supper, as the Masons were gathered about the open fire,—Mary with her knitting, Roy with his knife and some wood, with which he seemed very busily engaged, on some kind of a model, and John Mason with the last Tribune and a mug of cider, Mr. Brayton entered.

"Good evening all," he said; "you see we are getting very unceremonious; but I saw you through the window—the room looks very bright from without—and I came right along."

"That's right, sir,—all right," said John Mason heartily: while Mary took his hat, and the package which he held, and placed them on a side-table, saying: "Take this seat by the fire, we will enlarge our circle."

"Thank you:—good evening, Roy, you are busy, I see."

"Yes sir."

"What are you making now?"

"O, nothing much; but trying the engine principle again."

"All right, work away. This is a cheerful room, with the wide wood fire. Enjoying a mug of cider, Mr. Mason?"

"Yes: and you must share with me. We will lay aside papers, blocks and knife, Roy, and you may draw some more cider. Bring some apples and nuts

We indulge in this good cheer of an evening, when we want to sit and talk; and my wife will be bringing us some of her wine and cake."

"That will be very nice, I am sure," replied Mr. Brayton. "I shall enjoy it; it will seem like old times. My father was a farmer, and we had our cider always: not much wine; mother never made it, I think, but we were never without cider. But a minister, you know, has to plant his orchards for others. He plants and prunes, and others eat the fruit, and drink the wine."

Roy soon returned with a pitcher of sparkling cider, and pouring a mug, passed it to the minister, and then helped himself; and the talk flowed freely on events of public and local interest, until Mr. Monroe's name was mentioned.

"That reminds me," said Mr. Brayton, as Roy handed him the wine his mother had brought, and again helped himself: "You know I announced that next Sabbath is communion day; and to-day, Mr. Monroe sent me, with his compliments, this bottle of wine for the occasion. I knew that our good Mrs. Mason always provides for the Lord's table, and so I thought I would come over and talk with you about it."

"It certainly was a very kind and neighborly thing for Mr. Monroe to do," replied John Mason; "and while I doubt if his wine is as good as that Mary makes, and has stored away for the Lord's table, yet I certainly shall be in favor of using it, and returning thanks to Mr. Monroe for his kindness. And it may be one means of bringing him to the Lord himself, to know that the church does appreciate his gift."

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"I agree with you, John," replied Mary Mason "My wine will keep, and, like the grace of salvation, grow better as it grows old. I know mine is the pure juice of the grape, the fruit of the vine; and I have always had my doubts about the wine of the market. Yet I suppose Mr. Monroe keeps the pure article; and, at least, although I do not like him, I believe he would offer no other for the sacrament. And as you say, dear, it may do him good to know that his kindness is appreciated. He needs to be reached by the church, some way, and saved."

"I had such thoughts about it myself," said Mr. Brayton; "so we will use it. I will write a note and send him to-morrow, telling him this. I could not send any positive word until I had seen you. I will tell him that we will remember him at the throne of grace, praying that he may be brought into the fold. But, Brother Mason, I made a discovery to-day that makes me sad, for our growing village. Another of those dram-shops has been fitted up, down near the Number Two Shaft, and I fear it is a bad place for the miners."

"Yes," replied John Mason; "I noticed it yesterday; it is a bad place, I know, by the men standing around. We ought to do something about these dram-shops; they are a curse to any community."

"If we could only persuade the people to use the wholesome drinks in their own houses, it would be different," said Mr. Brayton. "But some of those men have no homes, only their boarding-houses, and of course it is natural for them to gather together in the evening somewhere; and perhaps the thing is

not as bad as it looks. Those colliers are not a very clean-looking crowd, anyhow, and men will be noisy when they congregate alone in that way. We can't help that very well; but one thing we might do, and that is tax those places; license them; and thus make them more respectable,—get them where you can control them, and also get a revenue for the town. The law provides for it, and they may just as well pay a tax of one or two hundred dollars a year as not, into the school fund, or for the poor, or for public improvements. You are one of the Trustees, and I think you had better see about that. Mr. Marsden is strongly in favor of this."

"That's a good suggestion, Mr. Brayton," said John Mason; "thank you for it. If they don't want to pay the tax they can leave; in that way we will get rid of the low doggeries, for, of course, not many could afford to pay the tax. Diffenbaum might, and of course Monroe:—he would favor this, I know:- and these would supply the demand of the town."

"Yes; and there is a demand," said Mr. Brayton; "we must not forget that. And not every man has a wife like yours, to keep him supplied with all he needs, and so he must go elsewhere."

"Yes, I see; and I shall present this matter at the board at our next meeting."

"And beside," said Mr. Brayton, "you will find it a good thing for the future, to get this business where you will be able to control it. Get it under the control of the bit and bridle of the law—for this traffic is, after all, very much like a spirited horse; good in its place, but naturally inclined to be vicious."

"By the way, do you know the preacher in the little chapel near the depot, that was improvised out of that building there—Mr. Windham? He preached, last Sunday, one of the most radical total abstinence, prohibition, Maine law sermons."

"No,—is that so?" said John Mason.

"And we had quite a little experience with them at our house, when they returned our call."

"Yes, Frederick was telling me," said Mary Mason; adding quickly, for she did not like anything like criticism of others who were trying to be and do good—"but I told him it was simply misapprehension on their part."

"What was it?" asked John Mason.

"Nothing of any consequence, dear."

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Brayton; "but little straws show the way of the wind, and I suspect we have a couple of radicals in Mr. and Mrs. Windham. Right pleasant people, however."

"And the boys were telling that there's going to be a temperance lecture in Mr. Windham's church before long, some night," said Roy, draining a glass of wine, from which his mother had sipped a little.

"Yes,—well, of course, we want temperance, and if they will but be temperate with their temperance, it will do good," said Mr. Brayton. "But I have protracted my call;" and he arose.

"Don't go just yet, Mr. Brayton," said John Mason. "We would like you to conduct our evening worship;—it is somewhat after our time,—but we have been enjoying our talk. Roy, bring Mr. Brayton the Bible."

So Roy brought the Bible, and laid it on the table beside the wine glasses, the cider pitcher, and the decanter.

Mrs. Mason took her seat at the organ. "What shall we sing?" she asked, and her husband replied: "Sing:

> 'Lord, I am thine, entirely thine;
> Purchased and saved by blood divine.'"

Roy found the place in the large singing-book, where this hymn is set to Sessions, and sat holding the book while Mr. Brayton read with a clear and agreeable utterance, the fifth chapter of Ephesians. Roy thought he had never heard the Bible reading at prayers sound so practical and authoritative before: it seemed to command his conscience, as he heard: "'And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.'" And he found himself wondering, and yet, he could not have told why, how Mr. Brayton could read those words so calmly, or they could listen as they did, and make no sign. In a moment came these words, cutting into his understanding, with the keen edge of inspired dictum: "'And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the spirit.'"

Roy could hardly account for the impression which these words made on his mind, and why he should find his thoughts going from point to point, out over the evening's talk, and why he should feel, somehow, that things did not harmonize.

He made up his mind to remember the chapter, and read it, and ask his mother about it. Then suddenly came this thought: "Why, of course! it says,

'be not drunk with wine;' we must not get drunk, of course, that's plain enough;—how stupid I was. I wonder if mother's wine would make anybody drunk?"

Roy was so occupied with his thoughts that he heard nothing more, until his mother touched the keys of the organ, and began to sing. Then he rose quickly, and placing the book on the rack before her, joined in the beautiful old hymn;—singing alto, while his father carried the bass, and Mr. Brayton added a melodious tenor. After the hymn, they all bowed, and Mr. Brayton commended them all to the kind and patient God of our faith.

Mr. Brayton took his leave at once, after prayer, and Roy took a lamp and went to his room.

Mary Mason cleared the things from the table, and as she did so, she could but think, that a great deal of cider and wine had been drank; yet she knew that Mr. Brayton took but one glass of each, and she had simply tasted, and handed hers to Roy. She made the room tidy, and then went up to Roy's room. As soon as she opened the door, she was greeted with:

"Say, mother! would your wine make me drunk, if I should drink enough?"

"It would make you sick, I presume, like anything else, if you took too much."

"Well, but would it make me drunk, mother?"

"Do you think I would give you anything, my son, that would make you drunk, properly used?"

"No, of course not. But the Bible said to-night, 'Be not drunk with wine;' and that seems like wine would make drunk come. Then I remember another

verse that I read 'tother day: 'Look not thou upon the wine when it is red.' Your wine is red enough, and I wonder if it would make anybody drunk? It flies to your head, you know, sometimes, so you can't drink much."

"Yes, I can't bear some things to eat or drink, that your father and you need; but you should quote the whole verse when you begin, Roy; then you will understand it better. The first is, 'Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the spirit.' And the last, 'Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.' These both refer to the 'strong drink,' the strong fiery wines, that are nothing like our simple homemade wine. They put alcohol in those wines, and that is what is meant by 'excess;' and when it has alcohol in it, it moves,—bubbles differently from our wine.* The alcohol is that much too much, in the wine. This poison has never been put into any of our wine. There is nothing in it that can hurt any one. What made you think of that to-night, my son?"

"I don't know, mother; it was the Bible, and the talk about the temperance meeting, and,—well, I guess I did eat too many apples and nuts, and drank too much; and I didn't know but I was getting sort o'—well, not drunk, of course;—but I don't feel good."

"Well, if you eat or drink too much, you will be

* It may seem strange to some readers, that a woman like Mary Mason should so ignorantly teach. And yet these are the words of a woman, wise in many things. There are women of to-day, just as ignorant as she, concerning the existence of alcohol in the cider and home-made wine.

sick, of course. You ought to know better than to do that;" replied his mother, laying her hand on his head. "Your head is hot; you must go right to sleep, and you will feel better in the morning."

Mary Mason knelt beside her boy's bed, and prayed for him, and then, tenderly kissing him, she took the lamp and went down. And Roy dropped off into a heavy sleep, induced by the "too much," which he had drank that evening; and his mother would have been shocked beyond measure, had she known that her darling son was really settling down into the stupor of incipient intoxication, even while she knelt beside him, pouring out her soul in prayer, for this object of her heart's devotion.

The next morning, Roy awoke with a dull, irritable feeling, that manifested itself in many ways, until at last his mother said:

"You are not well this morning, my son."

"Well 'nough, I guess," he replied; "only rather out of sorts,—cross, for some reason."

"Yes; and I hope you will remember the lesson of last night. Don't fill your stomach again so full that it has to cry out."

"I don't want any breakfast, mother," said Roy as they drew about the table.

"Not any breakfast! why, that is serious," said his mother. "When did you ever fail to eat breakfast?"

"Give him a little hot sangaree, wife; that will fix him all right," said John Mason, "and you may make some for me."

This was done, and Roy drank his glass with a strange eagerness, and after that, ate some breakfast;

but he did not feel satisfied; he was restless, and uneasy, and started for school, feeling out of humor with all the world nearly.

He was joined on the way by Archer and Mabel Brayton; and the company of the sprightly little maiden, who had stolen so into the heart of the boy, brightened him up considerably. Yet he could not be himself. School was a bore that forenoon, and the usually bright pupil brought upon himself the surprised reproof of his teacher, for failure; where Roy Mason, of all others, was expected to be prepared.

"What's the matter with you to-day, Roy?" said Archer, as they came out together, at noon.

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Roy; then quickly added, "Yes, I do too; I made myself sick last night, on apples and cider;—dyspepsia, I guess;—never did such a thing before;—played the pig, and have been in the dumps all day."

"Well, come; take a run," said Archer. "I have this note to take to Mr. Monroe, from father. I'll beat you at the corner;—one, two, three."

And the two boys started up the street, running with all their might; keeping side by side for a few paces, then Roy, who was more accustomed to muscular activity than Archer, gained, and came to the corner, where Mr. Monroe stood in his saloon door, some seconds in advance. He swung his cap, and shouted with his usual animation, as Archer sprang to his side, and joined in the shout.

"Hurrah for our side!"

"Hurrah for your side? I should think so," laughed Roy.

"Yes, why not? I'm on the winning side, now that I've caught up with you. That was a pretty good run, for a sick boy, Roy; wonder what you'd do if you were well? But I believe I could beat you if I should set out for it."

"All right," said Roy; "I'll give you a chance."

"Been having a race, boys?" queried Mr. Monroe

"Yes sir;" replied Archer. "and Roy beat; but he won't next time. We were the express train, bringing you this dispatch, and Roy is the engine, as he always is." And Archer handed the note to Mr. Monroe.

"Ah, yes: well, step in a moment, young gentlemen," and he waited for the boys to pass in before him.

They entered a beautiful lounging-room, all new and bright, fresh from the hand of the builder; hung with engravings, and chromos, selected with somewhat of taste, but with a profane incongruity that would hardly seem possible. Over the bar, stocked with all kinds of liquors, hung two companion pictures, one an engraving of the old oaken bucket, and the other, representing Christ, in the act of turning the water into wine, at the marriage of Cana. Opposite these were two other pictures,—chromos; one a bridal scene, and the other, a little child, kneeling in his night-dress beside his mother's knee, with folded hands, and uplifted eyes, with a dim, misty vision of opened heavens, and ministering angels, just above them.

The boys stood in the room, taking a view of all its furnishing, while Mr. Monroe read the note from

Mr. Brayton, acknowledging the wine, and assuring him it would be used at the approaching communion. He smiled as he folded the note, and looking up he saw the boys both standing before the picture of the child at prayer. He put a hand on a shoulder of each, and said:

"Pretty picture, that; don't you think so, boys?"

"Yes indeed," said Archer.

"There's many a man found his eyes getting wet looking at it," continued Mr. Monroe; "there's that engineer Briggs, come in here t'other day. I used to know him when he was a little fellow; and taking everything into consideration, I didn't wonder much that he had to leave; but he needn't ha' been so mad to find me here. Now, here's these over there; they are just as fine, but they don't generally take hold of a fellow's feelings quite like that one. But I like that old oaken bucket piece, and 'tother one, where Christ turned the well water into wine; just such wine as we have here, I presume; leastwise I've heard preachers say about the same thing. By the way, boys, it's my treat, and I'll open a bottle, just like that I sent up for the communion service, so you and I can have our sacrament here."

"Why, Mr. Monroe!" exclaimed Roy. "I don't believe it's right to talk that way."

"Well, no; now you speak of it—I guess it arn't; and I won't again.—I didn't think how it would sound.—I'll take it all back; but you can see whether you think the wine will be good for the service. Nobody respects the church more'n I do," continued the wily saloon-keeper. "My mother was a great church

woman, and I always pay a good share of all I earn into the church, one way or 'n other: and I think of joining myself." And Mr. Monroe gave a twist to the corkscrew, and a little pull, and the cork came out with a report, suggestive of a pop-gun; and turning up three glasses, he poured out the wine that was redder than blood, and showed a beautiful bead on the surface. Roy thought of the scripture he had read, and he was quite sure it must have been about just such wine as this. Yet he had not the slightest idea of declining it; instead, he reached out his hand almost eagerly, so much so that Monroe noticed it, and began a certain calculation, which made his eye glitter.

"Now, boys," he said, lifting his glass, "we'll drink together; and we'll toast the boy who won the race to-day; may he never come in behind time."

And Roy thought of a recent talk with his mother.

"That's not a very good wish for me, Mr. Monroe," laughed Archer; "that is, if I am going to run with him. But I'll drink the toast to you, Roy, with all my heart. I'd rather be beaten by you, than beat any other boy I know."

So the glasses were drained, and Mr. Monroe asked:

"Well, boys, what do you think of it; good, isn't it?"

"I think it's splendid," said Archer; "though I never drank any before,—that is, real wine, like this. I've drank some kind, though, and once, when I was sick, I had to take it every day, for a long time; and I like it first rate."

"I don't know as I am a judge," said Roy. "But I don't think I like any quite as well as that my mother makes."

"You'll never find any any better," said Mr. Monroe; "but of course, anything one's mother makes is a little better always, and the criticism you make on my wine, Master Mason, is very much to your credit, and not at all against the article in question. I think I must have a taste of Mrs. Mason's wine, some day."

"Mother will be glad to give you a glass, any day, when you will call, I know;" said Roy, politely. "And I'd like you to try it, and see if it isn't better than this; for really I think it is. But Archer, this makes me feel better;—this and the run together, have made me feel like myself. There's the bell. Thank you, Mr. Monroe, for your treat."

"Yes, thank you very much," chimed in Archer.

"Not at all, boys; come again, and stay longer,—we'll always be glad to see you," said Mr. Monroe, following them to the door.

"Thank you, we will," replied both boys in a breath, and started on the run back to school.

"We've stayed so long," said Archer, "we'll not have time for our lunch."

"I don't care," said Roy, "I feel first rate. I tell you that wine was just the thing for me,—it went right to the spot. I'm all right now; I shall know what to do if I ever get into such a fix again."

"Yes; and I guess Mr. Monroe's a real nice man," said Archer.

"Yes, I guess so," replied Roy; "but I didn't like

what he said about our taking the sacrament there."

"No, neither did I," said Archer; "but he didn't mean any hurt by it,—he just meant us to know 'twas the same wine."

"Yes, I suppose," said Roy; "but what's the use of it all, any how?"

"Of what?—the use of what?"

But Roy did not answer, and in a moment, Archer asked:

"Say, Roy, does your head feel queer?"

"No, not now," replied Roy. "It did feel bad, but it's all right now—does yours?"

"Yes; I don't see what makes it. I thought may be 'twas the wine;—but if it don't make you feel strange, it can't be that. I guess it was the running on an empty stomach. I'm going to get excused, if I'm late, and take time to eat."

"All right, so 'll I," said Roy. "I didn't eat much this morning. We'll have time, anyhow."

Roy did good work that afternoon, and quite redeemed himself for the failures of the morning, and went home at night, his own bright buoyant self, to his mother, who had felt a strange uneasiness all day She was reassured as he came bounding in, noisy full of energy, and boiling over with boyish pranks as usual; making himself felt from the barn to the pantry; provoking a "Roy! Roy!" from his father, and a "Why, my son," from his mother, at almost every turn; and keeping Napoleon on the jump, in an effort to keep up with his master.

CHAPTER IX.

SABBATH came, and with it, the communion service; and Mr. Monroe's wine was poured and consecrated, in the beautiful service of the church, and passed as the blood of our Lord and Saviour, to the devout worshippers.

Mr. Monroe was present, and felt that he had contributed quite as much as Christ had, to the service, which seemed to him more like a show than anything else. That wine;—he knew more about it than he would have been willing to tell;—for he had made it after a recipe, from drugs and water. It was the wine of his trade, and he was pleased to see it elevated and dignified by the service of the church. And he thought, there was quite as much to command respect in the wine, as in the service itself.

Mr. Monroe was a bold, bad man, if judged by th record of the past, and his present purposes; yet he was not as bad really in heart, as he was in life. He looks to me like a man who would have sold his mother's ring off her cold dead hand; but he would not have done that. He had a kind heart, a few generous impulses, a dash of real manliness, and was no

worse than many other men, who make the getting of money the one object of their lives. He had the same heart that is back of nine-tenths of the money-making schemes of the world.

His offering of the wine, for this occasion, and his treatment of the boys of the wealthy farmer and of the popular minister, and his interest in the church, were all simply in the line of his business; and he intended to make these little speculations pay.

Theodore Monroe belonged to a class whose every supposed interest is in direct antagonism to the interest of "God, and Home, and Native Land;" and yet he did not know this truth; and he was getting along in years, and had but small space left for the growth of truth and righteousness; or repentance for the past, which had been a record of sins at which his own soul even would have revolted, could he have been made to see them in God's light.

He had, with deliberate intent, led many a boy into the way of vice;—ruined him forever;—broken his mother's heart, and damned his soul, that he might get the money he had access to; and yet somehow he didn't get rich.

He had left the city where he had always lived, where he had developed from the fine fast young fellow of society, into the professional gambler; to take advantage of the opening, in this strangely favored spot; and he determined to make the venture a success. He had the shrewdness to see, at once, that a respectable, 'religious sort of place,' would take better with the people who composed Masonville, than any other. He knew, also, that his business was an

assured thing, provided he could get into the good graces of the well-to-do, steady-going people, for none knew better than he, just how the cider barrels and domestic wines of this region would contribute to his interests. Hence, the character of his decorations, as the boys found them. Hence, his contributions to every good cause,—for he was acknowledged to be a liberal man. And then he had another little plan. He said:

"I will make the boys my friends, and thus be looking out for to-morrow, while I attend to the business of to-day. If I work it right, I may yet own the Mason farm, with its rich mines; Mr. Marsden's bank, real estate, and rail-road; and Mr. Brayton's church. Ha! ha! I'm bound to get the church people on my side, anyhow."

He never allowed anything said against the church in his place. He allowed no profanity, no low or vile talk, in his bar-room. "Every man must be a gentleman and a Christian here," was one of his favorite expressions. He never allowed a drunken man to enter: he would refuse to sell beyond a certain amount to any one, and gave as his reason, that he was a "temperance man, and going to help folks keep sober. No one need be afraid of going home drunk from his place, to break some woman's heart; he was not in that sort o' business: he'd leave that to Diffenbaum, and such."

So he sat in a very contented and religious frame of mind, in his own pew, with his wife, and son, and daughter, during the season of communion that Sabbath day; looking on with outward respect: but in-

wardly regarding it as a good show: a sort of Passion Play with the Christ left out: a pleasant, practical joke on the Christians, perpetrated by the clergy; and a splendid business investment for Theodore Monroe.

Roy also looked on with a new interest in the old familiar service. As he saw the wine poured, he thought again of the words of Solomon, and with the words of consecration were blended these: "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright; for at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

"It's strange," he thought, "that Jesus should have told them to drink the cup that his Father's word commanded them not even to look at. I don't understand it; and how to ever know the difference between what God wants us to do, and not to do. That wine sparkles! it has a beautiful bead! and what a strong, delicious smell. I declare I'd like a whole glass of it, instead of the little sip they take. I've a good mind to take the sacrament, so as to get the wine. No! no! that would be wicked: I can't do that; for it's sacred to my mother, and Mabel; but when I get home I'll have a good glass full."

These were some of the thoughts that passed through the brain of the boy, as he sat during the solemn service, which commemorated the dying of the world's Redeemer. The tender meaning of the ritual, and the significance of the whole service, were nothing to him, because of the strange association of the table of the Lord with the bar of Monroe's sa-

loon; and because the thirst for the wine, that burned in his whole frame, gave an eager look to his eyes, and brought a drooling sensation to his lips, and set his nerves tingling with a greed which he could hardly control.

There were two persons in the church who noticed Roy:—one was Monroe, and the other Willie Briggs, who sat in Mr. Mason's pew, and was spending the day with them.

Roy was glad when the service was over, and he was out in the air. He walked with the Brayton children as far as their gate, and then ran on home, leaving his father, mother, and Briggs to follow.

He went directly to the sideboard, and poured out his silver cup full of wine, and was drinking it as the others entered.

"Why, Roy," said his mother, "are you sick, that you should be in such haste? Why don't you wait and have your wine with your lunch?"

"I couldn't, mother," replied Roy; and turned toward the door. He went out into the yard, followed by the keen eye of Briggs, and after a moment he put down the book he had taken, and went after him.

Roy was out by the fence, which separated the garden from a pasture, where some young stock were kept, and was standing with the head of a beautiful colt in his hand, stroking his sleek neck.

"Hello, Will! Isn't this a splendid fellow?" said Roy, as Briggs came toward him.

"Yes indeed, he is;" said Briggs, rubbing the animal's shoulder.

"He's mine,—all mine," said the boy proudly, and was going on with a description of his good points, when Willie interrupted him, saying:

"Come with me, Roy. We'll see the colt by-and-bye: but I want to have a little chat with you, old boy: let's walk out toward the orchard."

Roy wondered a little at the grave tone, and the real paleness on his friend's face: and without a word took his arm, and walked on with him. They walked in silence to the orchard; then Briggs dropped Roy's arm, and turning face to face with him, said, with evident effort:

"Roy, do you know I am afraid for you?"

"Afraid for me? Why?" asked the boy, looking at him in surprise.

"Because you love the wine;" replied Willie Briggs, almost in a whisper.

"Love the wine!—why shouldn't I?—my mother's wine."

"O, Roy!" said Willie, in a tone of distress, "I wish I could make you know why you shouldn't."

"Why, Will Briggs:—you like it, and drink it every time you get a chance: and I know you go to Monroe's and drink."

"No, I don't!" exclaimed Briggs, hotly. "Who said that?"

"Mr. Monroe told me you were in there."

"Monroe!—curse him!" said Willie, turning away and grinding his teeth.

"Will Briggs!" said Roy, "I don't see why you should talk and act this way. You drink wine, any how; you know you do."

"Yes, Roy," replied Briggs, as he turned a very pale face toward him: "that's all so; but I wouldn't if I could help it. I have to have it now;—and,—yes: I suppose I should get it at Monroe's, if there was no other place. And there's just such a thing coming to you. You are getting where you will have to have it, and I wish it could be helped; I do indeed. You are too fine a boy, and have too good a mother. If she did—but, alas! I don't see any help for it, and it is too bad. If I had known when I was of your age what I do now. It's an awful thing to be a slave to, Roy. Why, I even signed a pledge, and broke it; what do you think o' that?"

"I would not sign a pledge, in the first place, that wouldn't let me drink my mother's wine," said Roy. "I never intend to drink whiskey, or brandy, unless I'm sick: nor any strong drink."

"Well, Roy," said Willie, with a sigh, "keep that promise, and maybe you'll weather it; but O, don't get to loving the wine too well; don't let it spoil you, Roy."

"Spoil me? I guess not! I'm not so easily spoiled as that comes to. You talk as though you were an awfully spoiled boy; but I don't think so."

"You don't know about it, Roy. God grant you may not be, at my age, what I am: what I have been; I hope I am some better than I was."

"Well, I think you're a pretty good fellow,—so does mother; I heard her say so. And she prays for you, Will."

"Does she, truly?"

"Indeed she does."

"Well: I will try to be what I ought, and help—yes, for my mother's sake and yours, I will"—

"Say! D'ye see that squirrel Nap caught?" exclaimed Willie, suddenly changing the subject.

"No—where?" said Roy.

"Just out there, by the pasture fence."

"O yes!" And Roy bounded away to meet the dog, who was coming toward him with a large fox squirrel in his mouth.

And so ended the talk;—Willie Briggs failing weakly to sound the real true note of danger, which he started out to do, because it would involve the exposure of a chapter in his own life, which he could not bear to open.

CHAPTER X.

"MOTHER! mother! She works splendid!" shouted Roy, as he bounded into the kitchen one afternoon, the first of September.

"Glory, hallelujah!—'John Brown's body lies a'—Mother, d'ye hear? She works!"

"Why, Roy! how many of you are there?" laughed Mary Mason, coming out of the pantry with a bowl in one hand, and a spoon in the other. And she looked up at the tall, broad-shouldered young man beside her, or rather all around her, for he was keeping time with arms and legs, to the tune which he partly sang, and partly whistled.

"I don't see what the working of your engine has to do with John Brown's body."

"Well, I do, mother; and I'll tell you she's just splendid! and we've had a glorious time to-day. Most all Masonville was out, but you, mother; and I thought it was too bad, you and father didn't go and see her launched."

"I saw from here, my darling, and you know I was not well enough to go. What did you name the boat, at last?"

"'The Gazelle;' that was the only name we could really agree on; but my engine is the 'Mary Mason.' Her name is marked on a silver plate. I would have that, anyhow; and mother dear, you needn't be ashamed of your namesake; and you will let me take you out in the boat, some day."

"Certainly, if we live and all is well, a great many times, I hope."

"I want you to see her, mother. Mr. Lawton says she's a work of genius. He doesn't see how I've succeeded in making her, with the few tools and small chance I've had. And now, mother, we boys are going to have an excursion down the river, before Fred and Claude go back to school."

"What kind of an excursion, Roy?" asked Mary Mason.

"O, hunting; — shooting, and fishing, and fun. And I tell you, I feel ready for a week of play and fun."

"I don't doubt it, my son; you are always ready for fun."

"Yes, and work too, eh, mother?"

"Yes, dear, I have no complaint to make. You are never an idle boy. I wish you loved some kinds of work better than you do; but I am glad you have succeeded with your engine; you have worked on that, no one will deny."

"I guess I have worked," said Roy; "asleep, and awake; but now she's done, and in her berth in the steamer, and has been tested; and works splendid,— and that's the best of all. You just ought to hear how she puffs, and see how beautifully the smoke

rolled out of her smoke-stack. I tell you, you could feel her all over the Gazelle, every stroke."

"Are you sure it will be safe for you boys to go down the river, with the boat, Roy?" asked Mrs. Mason.

"Safe! mother? of course 'twill. She's the safest, tamest little giant, you ever saw. And I know all about her, and no one else will touch her. And, mother, we want to be ready in two days to start. The boys, you know, only have two weeks more."

"Who are you going to have in your company?"

"Fred and Archer, of course. How I wish Mabel was a boy, so she could go; – or that I had a sister, so they both could go, and be company for each other. I think I'd like that better than having Mabel a boy." And Roy laughed a little quiet laugh, and the color mounted to his forehead. "Jimmie Monroe, of course; he's captain of the Gazelle, for you know his father built her, mostly."

"Yes, I know," replied Mrs. Mason; "but you know how I dislike to have you go with Jimmie Monroe: I don't like him at all."

"I know it, mother," said Roy, a little petulently. "And I can't see why you are so prejudiced against him."

"Well," replied his mother, "he's like his father, —a cunning, unprincipled, selfish fellow."

"I can't see it," said Roy. "I have always found him a jolly good chum. Well, beside these, we have Dillie Wright, and Harry Diffenbaum; Will Knowlton, and Claude and Egbert Marsden; just nine of us; that's our crowd, anyhow; and about as many as the

Gazelle will accommodate nicely, for living a week. I told you Jim is captain; Dillie is steward and cook; and we've just the nicest little steward's room, with cupboards and everything. Of course, I'm engineer; Diffenbaum is mate; Knowlton takes the wheel, for he knows the river like a book; Archer is the clerk, and Fred, Claude, and Egbert, are our distinguished guests."

"How far will you go?"

"Down by the Great Bend. That marsh in there will be splendid for ducks. We'll anchor among the islands, put up our tent, if we want to; but shall probably stay on the boat nights, to take care of her, and be with the stores, for 'Injuns and things,' may want to come and get some of our cookies."

"Probably," replied his mother, laughing. "But what will you want to take with you?"

"O, lots of goodies: we'll get awful hungry, you know. Some o' that bottled cider, and a dozen or less of your best wine, the boys put down for my portion, and some o' your butter, they said. Blankets, and pillows. I must take a lot o' those harvest apples, too; they'll come good. We'll take things cooked, to last as long as they'll keep; and then we'll have to depend on our cook. I don't know how he'll make it go, but we shan't starve. I must put in my rubber suit and fishing-tackle; and we must have needles and thread. We'll make Fred and Claude sew on our buttons;—they learned at college, I suppose,—but here's father. Say, father, she's all right."

"Who, my son?"

"Why, my engine, of course."

"Then it works, does it?"

"Yes sir. *She* does, father; don't call her it. She lives, and moves, and has a being;—a soul."

"My son," you are very extravagant, I think," gravely said John Mason, as he sat down and unfolded the paper he had just brought from the office.

"Well, I think I ought to know if she has a soul; I made her."

"Why—here's something in the paper about it," said his father.

"Is that so?" and Roy sprang to his father's side, and looked over with him, while he read an article, describing the engine and the boat; and ascribing the honor of plans, and much of the execution to the "brilliant young captain, James Monroe, son of the hospitable proprietor of the Monroe House, who had been ably assisted by Mr. Roy Mason, who had charge of the engine."

The blood mantled Roy's cheek for a moment, and he exclaimed, indignantly:

"He didn't have anything to do with it, only his father hired the boat builder. Jim didn't even believe I could do it, but I did; and that engine is my own work, every bit of her; no one else ever touched her; and that's mean! I'll see about it."

"Shame, Roy!" said his mother. "Have you not the manhood to be above newspaper gossip?"

"I'm afraid not, mother, if it means to bear in silence,—to have my work given to some one else in this way."

"You cannot help the matter by 'seeing about it,'

as you say: at least not by anger. Curb your fiery spirit, my son: be your own engineer, and keep your hand on the safety valve. But come now, supper is ready."

The next two days were busy ones in the homes of the young adventurers. And to have seen the loughnuts, cookies, biscuit, and sandwiches, that were packed into the chest, in the steward's room of the Gazelle, you would have thought they were expected to eat their way to renown.

Mary Mason went about her share of the preparations with something of anxiety. Roy had never been away from her all night in his life, although during the last two years he had several times been out late; but she had always waited for him, and had never missed the last few moments with him in his room, before he went to sleep. Yet she had felt, somehow, that something was coming up between her and her boy: and now he was going to go off for a week or ten days, and it seemed as though she were going to lose him altogether.

John Mason thought his wife very foolish, as she expressed this to him.

"Why," he said, "here, Roy is eighteen years old, and has never spent a night away from his mother. He must begin some time to depend upon himself,—to go to sleep without his mother,—and I think it will do him good to go."

"Well, I may be foolish," replied Mary Mason; "but Roy is all we have. He is my life, really, John, and I cannot bear to think of night coming, and the doors being fastened, and he outside. I suppose

that's the woman of it," she added, with a low laugh, while her eyes grew moist. "I don't expect you to feel about it as I do, John;" and she patted the butter, with which she was filling a jar for Roy. "I don't wish him always to stay at home,—a boy,—my proudest hope has been to live to see him a man among men, grand and noble; finding his place and filling it; but I would like to choose, or have God choose his route, and the crew he sails with when he launches."

"And you'd like to go too in the same boat," replied her husband; looking at her with awe, as he noticed the emotion in her face; and trying to think of something funny to say, to break up the prospect of unwonted tears; but he utterly failed to get hold of the first amusing idea. So he began to whistle softly, and with his hands behind him walked out, saying, as he got to the door:

"Well, I'll go and hitch up, and take them jim-cracks down for the boy, before chore-time. Got 'em most ready?"

"Nearly ready: the blankets must be rolled, and tied in the sacking; but Roy 'll be in soon, and he 'll do it."

She kept bustling about, adding this and that to the stores. She put two or three books—his Bible, and a copy of Tennyson, among them,—into his valise, with some extra under clothing; and was just getting down to roll up the blankets, when Roy came bounding in.

"Most ready, mother?" he asked. "Here! let me do that. These blankets 'll be just the thing, for

it 'll be cool nights. Tell you, mother, everything 's going to be splendid: you ought to just see; the things to eat and all; we'll have a jolly supper down there to-night."

"I wish you weren't going to-night, to sleep there."

"Why not, mother? That 'll be half the fun."

"Fun for you, Roy, but what for me?"

"Now, mother, please don't fret; it 'll just spoil it all for me."

"My dear boy, I wouldn't spoil your pleasure for the world; but I can't bear to think of you gone over night. You have never been away over night in your life."

"I know it, mother," and Roy put his arms about her, and held her closely. "And I thought about that; but you know I can't be a boy always."

"I realize that, my son: I rejoice that it is true, and that you are almost a man. I rejoice in your strength, more even than you, but"—

"But what—little mother?"

"I don't know as you can understand me, Roy, but with all your growing, don't ever grow away from purity, from your home, your mother, and your God."

"Mother," said Roy, "I can't bear to see you troubled, and you seem so, to-day."

"I should feel more easy, Roy, if all the boys were good."

"Mother, dear, please don't; where will you find better? What do you know against one of them?" And there was almost a challenge in his tone.

"I know nothing against any of them, really. I presume they are good enough as a rule, but I would choose the very best for my Roy. There's Neddie Windham, and Clarence Lawton, for instance, they never go with these boys."

"No; they both act as if they thought we were all a bad lot; and their prejudice against Jimmie, as well as yours, is just because you don't know him; and do you think, mother, I would want a bad boy for my friend?"

"No, my darling, I do not, if you knew it. I don't think he is really bad, yet; but you know you thought yourself there was something not right about that item in the paper."

"That? Why yes, I should think so: but I don't believe he'd like it any better."

"Ah! that's the way you look at it? I thought"—

"That I blamed Jimmie?"

"Certainly."

"Well, I did not: that was the reporter, of course, and that just shows how prejudiced you are. He's a real good fellow, loves fun, and always gives everybody a good time wherever he is."

"Why does he never come to the door, when he wants to see you, but wait around and whistle? He does not act frank and open, like Frederick, and Archer, or Harry."

"He's afraid of women, I guess," answered Roy. "And then maybe he thinks you don't like him. But there he comes, to hurry me up, I guess." And a strongly built, large-faced young man of Roy's age, leaped over the fence, and came sauntering around to

the back of the house, looking up and down about the premises; and soon a shrill whistle caused Roy to drop the cord with which he was tying a package.

"I wouldn't run at a whistle, like a dog, Roy," said his mother.

"Mother," said Roy, in an impatient tone, "that's not it; it's just a boy's way; we all whistle for each other."

"I know you do, but I don't like it. It's a rogue's call. I like to see a boy go honestly to the door, and rap or ring, and look people frankly in the face."

Again came the whistle, and Roy replied in the same way and ran out. In a few moments he returned.

"Father's come, mother, and we're all ready when the things are in. So I'll bid you good-bye, now," for Roy felt that he could not kiss his mother before Jimmie Monroe. "I feel sorry to leave you feeling worried; we'll only be gone a week, or ten days at the longest, and you'll hardly miss me, before I am back again." And Roy took her again in his arms, and kissed her again and again, saying:

"Be a good girl, moméé,—good-bye."

"Good-bye, my darling," replied his mother: "I hope you'll have a good time. You'll find everything you will need, I think. Be good: don't stay over time."

"Yes:—no. Here we are, father, bag and baggage. Here Jimmie, please take this bundle, while I bring out some o' these traps."

And the boxes, jars, bundles, and baskets, were

stored away in the wagon; the boys mounted the wide spring-seat, on either side of Mr. Mason, and he picked up the reins.

"Good-bye, mother," shouted Roy again, turning and looking back as they drove away.

"Good-bye, mother," repeated John Mason; "I'll be right back: want anything from town?"

But Mary Mason had already taken her seat at the front window, which commanded a view of the drive-away, and the road to the village and river, and even the little craft that was waiting at the wharf.

"Yes," she sighed, "I suppose I am a very foolish woman, but I can't help it. Somehow I don't feel secure about Roy. He is different at times from what I expected my boy to be; as though there were an element in his veins, about which I know nothing,—and then I don't like Jimmie Monroe, or his father, and they are not doing Roy any good; and they do have an unquestioned influence over him of some sort, which I don't understand. I don't like Monroe's influence over John. I am troubled, in spite of everything which ought to make me happy, I cannot tell why. I believe Monroe or Jimmie are responsible for that item in the paper. I like Harry Diffenbaum, and I'm glad he's going, and somehow this relieves the situation somewhat. Frederick and Archer are not the good boys they were, I fear. The Marsdens—well, something is wrong all around. I really don't wonder Mr. Windham kept Neddie away from this company. Dillie 's so quiet that he seems harmless, and since Charley's awful death, seems very

steady. Willie Knowlton: yes, he's going. Well, heaven keep them all! God bless and save these boys."

And so she sat musing. Some of her thoughts did not really take form,—came like suggestions of mental pain,—symptoms of heart-ache, more than anything else.

"What if?—what if?—No, no.—Ah, me!—What a strange thing a human life is!—a boy's life and the heart of his mother! The world is so large,—to lose a boy in. I know more about it than John. Roy has a hunger for it—born in him. The long stretch of roads,—the wide, wide track of the sea, and my father at his engine, and the whole ship's company at the bottom. How I remember it! the long trips, the coming home,—then the one so long, from which he never returned. He loved the sea. Roy has the same spirit in him: he does not know what it is, but I do. If he should once see the ocean, it would chain him forever. O, God, keep hold of him, and make a man out of him for me, for thee—for thee; and it is all I ask. I will submit to anything, that will answer this prayer."

CHAPTER XI.

MORE than five years have passed, since the beginning of our story. The village has grown with marvellous rapidity, both in population and importance; being the centre of a large and constantly developing mining and lumber region; and it already has the air of an established town. The river is lined with mills. Trains loaded with lumber, and coal, and other products, are almost constantly passing. Stores have been multiplied; good residences built; a new church has been erected, of which Mr. Windham is pastor; the school buildings have been increased, and the saloons have become numerous enough to yield quite a revenue, under the "well regulated license system," which was introduced by John Mason, at Mr. Brayton's suggestion. There was opposition to this. Mr. Windham preached, and talked, and prayed against it; but he was considered a fanatical sort of a man; and yet he was supported by many of the best people of the place; and on the board of trustees was one who would always vote "no," to every measure which recognized the drink traffic in any way, other than as a criminal institution.

But the temperance people were in the minority, and as yet, had not made themselves felt in the circle of our friends. Mr. Brayton advocated the tax, as we know, and also the moderate use of liquors; claiming that there is a demand for them in the human system, and hence, it must be necessary, and therefore right to use them.

Mr. Monroe has enlarged his place and business, and now the Monroe House is the finest hotel in a long distance, with a saloon that is well known all along the line. He still maintains the religious character of his decorations; and has added several "appropriate" passages of Scripture, in illuminated text and elegant framing. During the summer many pleasure seekers find their way to Masonville; attracted by the beautiful valley, hills, and forests, which have not been wholly shorn of their loveliness by the spirit of enterprise. The Glen has become renowned: and many a gay party has felt the sweet solemnity of its solitude. Mabel's echoes have been tantalized by many gay voices, and the descendants of her squirrels have learned to keep a good look-out from the watch-tower in the old maple, and to hide at the sound of a human foot or voice.

Mabel Brayton is become a beautiful girl of eighteen, but still looking and appearing much younger; and she is still Roy's especial friend. Frederick is a sophomore in college, and Claude Marsden is his chum; and Archer thinks he is preparing with his father; but thus far his work has been very unsatisfactory, and his father lays the blame to the fact, that there are "too many boys around."

Roy has developed into a young athlete; tall, broad-shouldered, perfectly proportioned, and with as fine a head as you will find among thousands, with any amount of force in reserve, together with a large, generous heart, that stands him in good stead among his friends. But he has given occasion for anxiety; and sometimes it was more than his love for his mother, or his respect for his father's authority could do, to keep him to the line of safe and true living. But after many escapades and ventures, he fell in with an idea that sobered him, because it really gave him something to do. He had always experimented with tools, in wood and iron, but he was too full of restless energy to really settle down, and work at anything that did not take complete possession of him; and as he had grown up out of the realm of mimic machinery, he seemed utterly without occupation. He only liked a certain line of study in school. He would eagerly search for, and soon master, any principle in science that could be practically applied; and seemed naturally to seek for palpable expression for every such principle that came to him, in the circumscribed course of his school studies. When Mr. Lawton moved to the new city, he brought a fine library of scientific books, such as would be found in the possession of a master of engineering. Roy soon found his way into the presence of these books.

"Now, I have found something to eat," was his graphic expression, as he took down and examined book after book.

"Well, eat your fill, my boy," said Mr. Lawton. "Come and help yourself;" and Roy did so: and he

read a great deal those days; neglected his school work for this, and seemed fully possessed with the one idea that had been slowly taking shape;—*e. g.*, to construct an engine himself, suitable for the river. A small one, of course, he thought; but one that would be able to propel a boat. As the thought grew, he expressed it; first to his mother, then to Jimmie Monroe; then he talked it over with Mabel, as they strolled together through the Glen, and they all, in different ways, however, laughed at the idea; Jimmie, long and loud; Mrs. Mason, in a quiet and proud way, saying:

"I don't doubt you could do it, my son, if you should work in a shop a while, and get an insight into the construction, but you will have to learn."

"I suppose so, mother," he replied, "but I shall learn; I feel it in my bones."

Mabel's laugh was a very merry and inspiring one, for it said as plainly as words:

"I know you can do it, just as easy."

Roy next talked with Mr. Lawton, and that gentleman encouraged him, and promised him all the help he could render, in buying material. He procured for him some copies of a scientific journal, in which the steam-engine, as adapted to the river craft, was illustrated and explained in all its details; and he opened the way by which Roy should have access to a shop in the village.

Roy tried his hand on a small model first, and worked on this until he had mastered the mysteries of construction; and then he began in earnest, on what seemed to him his life work.

During the months in which he was occupied with this, he kept early hours, drank less, and was more satisfactory to his friends than he had ever been; and even Willie Briggs, who only saw him occasionally, was beginning to feel that perhaps Roy would disappoint his fears.

When Theodore Monroe saw that Mr. Lawton had confidence in Roy's ability to complete what he had begun, he became interested, for he saw in the enterprise that which might be turned to account. A neat little steamer would be quite an addition to the facilities of the place; so when the work on the engine had progressed sufficiently to satisfy those interested that Roy "really knew what he was about," Mr. Monroe proposed to furnish a boat for his engine to "live in;" and that Roy and Jimmie should be joint owners,—Jimmie being captain, and Roy engineer.

Of course, Roy was delighted with the proposition, and the agreement was made, and Mr. Monroe had the work begun at once; and so during the latter part of that summer, the chief interest in the town among the young people, centered about the yard where the Gazelle was being builded on her keel, and the shop where Roy was hammering away on his engine.

The work was completed the last of August, and the engine was settled in her berth, in the trim little steamer, which was launched with appropriate ceremonies, and the trial trip taken. Success crowned the boy and his work, and he was congratulated on all sides.

James Monroe is like his father, and Mary Masor has read him aright. He has immense influence, however, over his associates, because of a certain imperativeness, and intensity of purpose to carry his point at any cost, which characterized him: his point being, as a rule, to further his own selfish ends, even if his friend must be sacrificed.

Harry Diffenbaum is his father's bar-tender, and Diffenbaum's place is called the lowest in town, because the poorest in appearance, and Harry is estimated accordingly; regarded by the better class of people as a very unpromising beginning of a man Not that he had not natural gifts, for he had, of a high order; but because he was Diffenbaum's son; which could hardly be believed by any one, who should see the two.

But behind Diffenbaum and his uncleanness, was a pure, strong-hearted, well-informed Christian woman; and back of the saloon, with all its unholy influences, was her home. No one knew anything about Mrs. Diffenbaum. She was rarely seen outside her home, excepting as she went with Harry to Mr. Windham's church, which she did regularly.

This woman had been deceived by a marriage with a man whom she supposed to be good and pure, but whom she discovered soon to be complicated in various ways with disreputable people and transactions; a saloon, of which he was proprietor, being a headquarters for almost all kinds of sporting men. He tried to make his home like his saloon, common to them, at first; often bringing them with him, but this his wife would not tolerate. And she was strong

enough, and true and brave enough, to compel him to come to her terms in these matters, and she was rid of the annoyance of the company she could not receive. She had loved her husband deeply and truly, and she could not forget this. She could not cease to love him, but her love became that of one who desires and would be willing to die for the salvation of a soul. She felt that somehow a work for his soul had been given her, and she must answer for it, before God.

Without this conviction she might have left him, but with it she could not. She felt that her faith would indeed be a farce, if she could not, with God and his Christ on her side, somehow prevail over the evil that had crept into her husband's life.

When her son was born, which was soon after she began to know that her trust in manhood had been dishonored, she formed the purpose of making a man for the Lord out of him, in spite of all things to the contrary. She gave the child solemnly to God, and with agonizing prayer, plead her cause before the Lord, until there came to her a sweet and blessed assurance that she was heard; and she knew that she should have the hand of the Lord with her in all her work, and that he accepted the offering of her son. Then she arose, and went with sublime faith and courage about her appointed task, feeling that she could wait any process, that was required to the result.

She thought: "My child must reverence and obey his father; what would he be with this principle left out of his nature?" She taught Harry that his father

was a victim of that awful demon, rum, which made him do and be many things which he would not, if he were himself. And it was clear, even to a child, that his father was not the man, when he was perfectly sober, that drink made him. So Harry learned to hate rum, and the saloon, as the one enemy of his father, and mother, and home.

Mrs. Diffenbaum often said, so that the boy drank in the spirit of the words: "Harry must help mother save father, by-and-bye."

But as the years passed, it seemed she had to wait a great while, and she often cried out: "O Lord, how long?"

As Mr. Diffenbaum grew older, he became harder, and the case began to seem hopeless, especially when he insisted on placing Harry in the saloon, and training him to his own business.

This was a terrible day to Harry's mother. She could not consent; and yet, she was powerless to prevent it, unless she could take the child and flee. That she could not do. For a time she seemed almost forsaken, and was in despair. In this crisis, one Sabbath morning, Mr. Windham read the story of Naaman; and these words of the cleansed leper came to both mother and son as from God: "In this thing pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant. And he said unto him, Go in peace."

"Ah," she said to Harry, "we are like Naaman,

in the legal service of one who worships a strange god: we cannot leave: we must wait for this thing to grow out of darkness into light. We belong to father, and he to us; we are all one, in one sense, and must let God take the lead in everything we try to do, or not do. You will be a man sometime: when you are twenty-one you will be legally your own, and can dictate terms to father, but now you can't; he would not hear you. But promise me, on your knees, that you will never taste a drop of the poison; sell no liquor if you can help it; sell to no boy, for that is against the law, which father must respect, even if he does not heed the law of God. We will take every advantage we can get. If father sells to any poor drunkard, or man of family, if you can learn how much money he takes, let me know, that I may return it to his wife. Will you help me save father? Will you help me undo the work of the saloon? Will you be true, Harry?"

"I will, mother," replied the boy, clasping his arms about her, "I will, and we will break up that saloon, and get father away from it, somehow."

And Harry Diffenbaum had stood behind his father's bar, with this voice of his home ringing in his ear, and hidden in his heart; and he literally obeyed. Many were the poor wives of the miners, and woodmen, and mill-hands, that had been made glad by having returned to them the money spent for whiskey and beer, at Diffenbaum's saloon; and Harry had never yet gone home to his mother with the smell of its fire on his breath.

The boy seemed old and thoughtful, for his nine-

teen years, at the date of this record; and evidently had the care of his father on his heart and hands, for he was beginning to drink more and more, and to become more turbulent than ever before. No one knew how weary Harry was; and how impossible it seemed to wait two years more, to be his own man. Mr. Marsden coveted Harry for his business, and had made advances, offering him a good position, which he believed him capable of filling to the advantage of the business; but Harry had replied:

"Not now: the time may come: but I cannot leave my father until I am of age."

If any of my readers are disposed to say "that was not right; Mrs. Diffenbaum should have taken Harry and left her husband, rather than take such a risk of the boy's soul, and become a party to the traffic;" to this I reply, I am not supposing a case, but giving you a history from real life. I give you the fact, and leave you to your own reflections.

Harry had been attracted to Roy; and he had been glad to receive an invitation to join the company, and serve as mate to the captain, on their trip, principally through the influence of Mr. Marsden, whose sons were going. Mrs. Diffenbaum insisted that he should go, and so he accepted the position of mate on board the Gazelle; going that day with his mother's blessing warm on his lips, and in his heart. After he had started, he turned back to say:

"I don't know as I ought to go, after all, mother. Father is drinking more lately, and Brown will be sure to get drunk, and abuse those children, if I am not here to prevent it."

"Go, my son," said his mother, holding him again to her heart. "You must have a little change; I will keep your watch while you are gone: be a good boy, and have a good time."

CHAPTER XII.

AS John Mason's rig drew up alongside the landing, where the Gazelle was waiting, Roy was seized rather roughly, as they considered him delinquent, having to be sent for. He was taken on board by many hands, carried almost like baggage, while the by-standers cheered and laughed.

"Boys will be boys, Mr. Mason," remarked Mr. Monroe; "and you'd have to go a long way to find a finer nine than these. Your boy is a magnificent fellow, physically, and mine is not to be sneezed at."

"Yes; they are a fine lot of boys," replied John Mason, picking up Roy's hat which had fallen in the scuffle: "and I hope they'll have a good time. That is a neat little craft; we must go aboard and see how they're fixed. I'll take on part of Roy's traps."

And John Mason took the bundle of blankets, and followed Mr. Monroe over the plank.

"Roy," called his father, "where'll I put your things?"

"Roy?" said Jimmie Monroe. "If you want Roy you'll have to look further: he's gone to feed his

crocodile: he always has to coddle the creature every time he comes around."

"What would your craft be without Roy's crocodile—as you call it,—I should like to know, Captain?" laughed Mr. Monroe.

"O, certainly! We all appreciate her and her maker. Roy 'll take your head off, though, father, if you call her *it*. Here they are, Mr. Mason;" and Jimmie opened a door that led to the hold. "They make a splendid team—don't you see the resemblance between them?"

Roy looked up with a soft, yet triumphant light in his eye, as he met his father's, and said, as he put his hand on the lever:

"Isn't she a beauty, father?"

"Well—yes, I think it is."

Roy smiled slightly, and said:

"O father, don't: she isn't *it*,—she's alive, I say! I told you a while ago she has a soul; you ought to hear her breathe!"

"Roy," said his father, laughing, "I should almost think you were going crazy; don't talk such nonsense, it makes you ridiculous. A soul in an engine!" And he laughed again.

"Well," said Roy, with gravity, "I can't answe for any but the Mary Mason, but I do know about her: tell me where she gets all her power, if she hasn't a soul?"

"Roy, don't be silly; you know as well as I do, you're just talking to hear yourself," replied his father, and turned away, saying; "Shall I bring in your things from the wagon?"

"O, I'll come and do that;" and Roy sprang up to the deck, and over the plank, and out to the wagon, almost before his father had mounted from the hold.

"That boy beats all!" said he, as he met Roy with his arms full of packages. "Well, young man, wait till you're old as I am," he said, giving him a hearty slap on the shoulder, "and you'll slow down, as you say about the trains."

The things were all taken in, and John Mason said good-bye, and turned homeward, to be in time for the chores. He felt very lonely, in spite of all he had said to his wife in the morning, and wished, with all his heart, that Roy were going up the hill with him, and that he could find something to interest him, and a place for the exercise of his power on the farm. It never could be made to appear to John Mason that this might have been much to his own advantage; developing the resources of his rich but unused acres. He had been given, in his son, just what he needed to turn to account the treasures stored in the forest back of the house, and the earth beneath him, and the water-power that gushed from his hills; but he had shut out the spirit of enterprise from his own life, and left his son to the tricksy elf, who was not slow to see that he was constructed on a principle that made it impossible for him to ignore her subtle forces. Roy was compelled to be much, aye most that we find him. The blood of his grandfather, the engineer, was never still in his veins; and the drive of the engine itself seemed in his nerves; and alas! the breath of the demon of the wine cup had

been breathed into him from his first hour, and was woven in with his very life; a latent fire, which was being daily fed by the habits of his home, and the teachings of his church.

Neither John nor Mary Mason dreamed of the secret spring from which Roy drank at once the inspiration and the bane of his success.

The boys held a sort of reception on board the Gazelle that evening. Many came to look over the boat, to see the wonderful little engine, and to pay their compliments to the excursionists. Cake and wine stood on the table in the cabin, and was partaken of by nearly all. Mr. and Mrs. Windham came with their son Ned, and daughter Anna; passed through, speaking cordially and frankly to each, and examining the appointments from deck to hold; talking with Roy about his engine, and then passed over the plank, Mr. Windham saying:

"O, what a pity! Such a waste of the very best material! Such a ruin as that wine will make. Something must be done."

Mr. Brayton and Mabel came, and Roy found the sweetest delight in showing the enthusiastic little woman all about the Gazelle. She hopped and flitted bout him like a sprite, as he talked and explained.

"I tell you, Mabel, when we get back, you must go for a trip. I wish you could go now," he said.

"So do I. I asked mamma if some way couldn't be invented so I could. But I'm a girl, and that settled it beforehand; just as it has a great many other things that I'd like to do and be. But this is rea.

splendid, Roy. What a lovely cabin! and the deck, and your 'pet,' as the boys call it, down there."

Roy never noticed that Mabel said *it*. "And the pilot-house on top, that's where I'd want to ride."

"Oh," said Roy, "I think you'd want to be here by the Mary Mason, and hear her breathe, and feel her tread, and smell the fire."

"Well, I don't know," said Mabel, slowly, "which I should like best. I should be a little afraid of the engine, I guess, if you hadn't made it; and I should like to see the beautiful water, and the hills; but then, of course, I should want to be with you, Roy, after all. It would be strange for me to be up in the pilot-house, and you down here, wouldn't it?" and she laughed a merry laugh at the idea.

Roy looked down at the tiny figure before him, and for the first time in his life a pang shot through his very soul, as he thought of the possibility that anything should separate between him and Mabel.

"I cannot live without her," he thought, "she must always be where I can see her; sometime she must be my wife." But he only said—while a bright spot came to his cheek, spread out over neck and ear, and made it tingle, and a warm light was in his eye—"I should think it would be strange for you to be up there, and me down here. You must be where I am always—always, Mabel."

There was something in the boy's tone that made Mabel look up into his face a moment, and as she met his earnest gaze, a faint blush came to her cheek, and her lip quivered slightly. Just a moment they

stood thus, when she exclaimed, under her breath, dropping her eyes:

"Why, Roy! You make me half afraid! I didn't suppose you would—you would care so."

"Of course I care," he cried, and bending down, he said, in a tremulous tone, while his eyes were a little misty, "I don't believe I could even run her," pointing to the engine, "if I knew you were up there, because you'd rather be there, than here with me."

"Why, Roy!" said Mabel, "of course I wouldn't. I'd rather be where you are, always. But don't, please, look at me as if you'd eat me up, or I'll run away."

"I don't know but I would eat you," replied Roy, with a quivering laugh, "if I couldn't keep you any other way."

"Why, how queer you are, Roy!" she said; "but I'm not going to be eaten, for here they all come, and they won't let you be a heathen; and you must show papa all about the creature, and make her breathe, and tread, as you say:—mustn't he, papa?"

"What's that, daughter?" said Mr. Brayton.

"Mustn't Roy make his 'pet,' as the boys call it, go through with all her tricks for us?"

"Well, I don't know about that," said Mr. Brayton. "I don't like to see an engine that plays tricks; though I should like to see her in motion. I've been pretty familiar with her from the first, haven't I, Roy?"

"Yes sir; you've watched her construction pretty closely; and I remember some valuable hints I got from you. I shall be glad, indeed, to take you and

all our fathers and mothers, out for a ride some day and show you how she works."

"Me too," piped Mabel.

"Yes indeed, and you too," said Roy.

"And Nellie Monroe," said Archer, "that is, if Fred is here."

"And Irene Marsden," retorted Fred, "for Archer's benefit."

"Take all the boys' sisters," said Mabel.

"Yes indeed," said Captain Jim; "and we'd make up about as nice a company for a day's ride as you'll often find; and I suppose, Miss Mabel, you will go as Archer's sister?"

The smile which passed around the circle, and the look at Roy, as this was said, caused him to blush more painfully than he had ever done before in his life, and turn away. Nor was he relieved by the perfect coolness with which Mabel replied:

"Certainly:—I'm always Archie's sister."

"Well, my daughter," said Mr. Brayton, "it's time for us to make our adieux, and go. We shall be lonely at our house to-night, but I hope you boys will have a thoroughly good time, and that Roy's 'pet,' in there, will not get to playing any tricks, but will bring you home safely. You'll be out over the Sabbath, will you?" And he looked at his sons as though a new thought had come to him.

"I suppose we shall, sir:" replied Captain Jim, "unless some one is sick, or gets drowned, or shot."

"God forbid!" said Mr. Brayton. "But take care of the Lord's day, if you are out still;" and he shook

nands all around. Mabel kissed her brothers, and nodded in her quick, imperious way to the group skipped away over the plank, with her father, and was soon out of sight, behind the rail-road buildings. The boys scattered, and left Roy alone; and he stood and looked homeward, and watched; for he knew that soon they would come in sight again, and expected a parting salute from Mabel. Nor was he disappointed: as they came in view, he saw them pause and turn, and soon a little white handkerchief fluttered toward him, waved in the hand of the dearest girl in the world. He responded with his hat, and at the same instant a lance of gold from the brow of Sunset Hill shot forth, and was broken into a thousand flame-like splinters, against the windows of the dear old house where he was born. His eyes filled for a moment, as he thought of his mother sitting at that window, and of all she had said to him about her loneliness, when he should be away, even for a week; and he wondered what she would do, when he really left home for good, to try his luck in the world. And as Mabel dropped her hand, and turned toward her home with her father, he fell into a little dream of the future, in which she was naturally and sweetly blended. He turned, as the gold was deepening to purple in the window of his own room, and joined the gay company that were waiting in the little cabin, to pay him up, in genuine boys' exchange, for his indulgence in sentiment, to which they had been by no means blind.

There was not much discipline on board the Gazelle, and there was as much going over the gang

plank that evening, as though she had been a packet of the line, taking passengers for the long trip; and when late in the evening, Roy began to 'fire up,' slowly, so as to be ready, with steam on, for an early start, the interest grew, until it became enthusiasm; and the whole crew would have been quite ready to pull away at once, and start down the river in the dark; and the visitors to have joined the excursion, and taken the chances of being wrecked before morning.

But after a while the 'last dog was hung,' as Captain Jim graphically expressed it; and the boys were alone. The plank was drawn in, and they settled themselves for a few hours' sleep, after a really wearisome day, even to a boy.

Then again Roy thought of his mother, and that she would not come to his bedside that night; and then he realized, as never before, that he was really coming toward manhood, or that something, which was coming between him and the boyhood of his life. The little bedroom in the gable seemed as a thing of the past;—something which he had outgrown; and he wondered if he should really ever go back to it, and the life he had always known.

As he stepped out to take a last look, and see that all was right, before resting,—Dillie was to watch the first hour,—he glanced up the hill toward the house and there, like a star set in the brow of midnight, shone a light from his window, while all beside was enveloped in deepest shadow, for the night was dark.

"Mother is there, praying for me, just the same;" he thought, and bared his head, and stood with his arms folded upon his breast, while his heart beat with

a strange and strong emotion, such as had never come to him before.

"What am I to my mother?" questioned he of himself. He could not get beyond the question: but a deep and tender impulse uttered itself in his soul, to be, to her, always the true and faithful son, the man she had so often told him she expected him to be. And standing there, he looked off into the future, and beheld a vision of the man he expected to be in forty years from then. His ideal man!—he stood in a wide and high place,—a king among men; tall and erect, with white hair, but eyes undimmed; a brow serene, a face full of benevolence, and pure in every outline. A man whose position was assured, whose foundation was firm as the Rock of Ages; a man into whose life had been poured all the blessings of a thousand answered prayers, from the best mother in the world. And by his side he saw the beautiful form of the little maiden of his boyish love, just as he saw her that afternoon, a lovely vision in the foreground of his home, waving her salute to him, from the hill-side, with the sunset glory about her. She was still young in his dream; for Mabel could never change.

Roy was not sentimental; but he had, hidden away, a deep-sealed well of strong feeling, which had never yet been opened; but whose tides were sometimes felt in the surface current of his thoughts; and to-night, as this strong pressure from above was upon him, he was given to know somewhat of the secret of his soul's great deep, that was yet to be broken up.

That night he heard the voice of God, calling him to surrender self, and accept Christ; to yield his proud consciousness of power, and become subordinate to the controlling will of God. He knew his mother was praying for this, he felt the cord of her love, and that of the divine One, as it tightened about him; but he said:

"No: I cannot do that yet. It is a great thing to be a Christian. I am not yet ready; some time further on."

As he looked, he saw the light flicker in his window, then all was dark: he knew that his mother had gone down, and he went in.

CHAPTER XIII.

ROY did not sleep much that night. He 'turned in' with the boys, but he heard every sound, as the watch on deck went his round; and as every hour a new call was made, before his turn came he arose and went down to the hold, to look after the fire. He opened the drafts, and added fuel, and was ready with a good head of steam, some time before the hour for starting off.

It required but a word to bring every boy out, ready for a start, with the first light of dawn. Willie Knowlton ascended to the pilot-house, and took his station at the wheel. Captain Jim was at the prow, and Roy, with his hand on the lever, 'whispered to his pet,' as the boys said, and the engine began to 'breathe,' and sent out a shrill cry, that was caught and tossed back and forth between the hills. She began to work, in a nervous, excited sort of way, jerking out short quick puffs, as if short for breath, and thrust out her arms, and the wheel began to revolve, making a delightful swishing sound in the water, as Roy thought, standing at his post, and feel-

ing in every fibre of his being that he was immensely more mighty than this creature of his hands. Had you talked to him about reserve power then, he would have known and felt what it meant.

The Gazelle was turned into the channel, and underway, by the time the people were astir; and a cock in the Knowlton barn-yard, just across the river, answered the whistle of the steamer, with a clear note on his bugle. With the first light of morning, Mabel looked out of her chamber window, and Mary Mason from hers, towards the dock where the Gazelle had stood, and nothing was to be seen but the blue water; while down the river, just turning the curve around the spur of the hills, could be seen the smoke-stack of the steamer, flaunting her graceful white and gray plume of vapor; and the woman and the child commissioned all the winds, as they passed, blowing southward, to take to the heart of the young engineer some thought of those who were watching his course, with eyes full of the pride of love.

On board the Gazelle all was ship-shape, and every man was at his post.

"You order us around, cap'n," said Dillie, "or we shan't feel that you earn your title; and so Captain Jim was moving briskly about, keeping an eye on everything, and giving a great many commands, in a tone gotten up for the occasion. Willie kept a sharp look-out from his observatory, kept the boat in deep water, and cleared every island and sand-bar beautifully. Archer stood at his desk, and made the first entry in the 'Log of the Gazelle,' in a bold round hand, with many a flourish. Dillie was proving his

ability as a steward, by selecting a general assortment of good things from the hampers, for breakfast. The odor of the coffee was delicious, as it stole out to the keen senses of the hungry boys.

Frederick Brayton came to watch Roy and the engine, while waiting for breakfast, and when he saw how easily he managed her, he exclaimed :

"I tell you, Roy, I'd give my chance for yours this minute. I don't know anything about any machine ; couldn't learn if I should try ; but I declare I envy you."

"Well, I'm contented to-day," replied Roy, with a long sigh of delight, as he felt the throbbing of the heart in that chest of steel, which he had made, and saw the regular motion of the arms of power, which had taken form under his hand. "But," he continued, "I know I shouldn't like always to be doing just this. I've been thinking all this morning of how I could improve this whole thing, if I had it to do again. But she's a beauty, just as she is, and if she hasn't a soul, I'd like to know where she gets her power."

"Why, of course you know, Roy ;" said Frederick.

"Yes : — but where does the steam get its power ?"

"Why, from God, of course; its power is in it, in the very nature of it."

"Yes : it has power because God is in it. I read the other day, 'There is no power but of God ;' and so it is from God, who is a spirit, that my engine gets her power ; and if that is not having a soul, I'd like to know what you'd call it."

"You're a queer boy, Roy," said Fred : "your reasoning is deep enough for a professor of metaphy-

sics, instead of an engineer: but I'm afraid you're hardly orthodox."

The breakfast bell rang, and their conversation was interrupted.

"Say, Fred," said Roy, "tell Dillie to bring my breakfast to me here. I shall not leave the engine. Tell him to bring me a generous glass of wine now, and I can wait for the rest."

It was a merry company that gathered about the table in the little saloon: and the breakfast was praised, and the cook commended for his skill in placing on the table the good things prepared by the mothers at home.

Fred took the wine to Roy, who drank it with an eagerness that made Fred say:

"Why, Roy, you needn't be in such a hurry; I can wait for you to drink, I guess, if I am hungry."

"Well, I'm hungry too," said Roy, "and felt as if I must have something right off; but I'm all right now, for a while. Go to your breakfast."

"Now, Roy, tell you what 'tis," said Fred; "'tain't fair for you to wait here until we get through. I'm going to bring your breakfast now, and you needn't say a word, for I couldn't eat with any comfort, and think you were hungry enough to turn cannibal."

So Roy was served with sandwiches, cold chicken, cake and pie, and a second glass of wine was brought by Captain Jim; and this time it was from Mr. Monroe's stock-in-trade, some that Jimmie had himself chosen, and it possessed a quality which Roy was beginning to appreciate, and which he really preferred to that made by his mother. The slow poison of

alcohol was beginning to make itself felt in the boy's blood, and there often passed along his nerves a peremptory dispatch, demanding 'more,' and 'stronger;' which, if he had understood, would have made him tremble, and which, if his mother had known, would have thrilled her soul with horror.

But the people with whom Roy mingled, were asleep concerning the danger that had lurked in the cider and wine. The serpent's egg was, as yet, a harmless plaything, and none knew or dreamed of what it would yet bring forth, save only Willie Briggs; and he had not the courage, the manliness, to sound the alarm. He was himself going down fast, and was in no condition to try to save any one else. And yet had he been more often in Masonville, and known the true state of affairs, the probabilities are, that his love for Roy would have constrained him to speak.

Roy drank his wine with his breakfast that morning, with a wonderful sense of relief and refreshment. He realized an exhilaration and strength afterward, that made him almost seem really a part of the engine; under the influence of which he was prompted to feed the fire, and open the valves, as he would not have done before; as though the capacity of the engine had been increased in proportion to his own sense of added power.

Harry Diffenbaum saw the wine poured, with a feeling of dread. He saw that it was a matter of course, with the boys, that the wine was on their bill of fare. He knew that his abstinence would occasion remark, and he almost wished he had not

come. But during the breaking up of the company at the table, by serving Roy, Harry took a quiet breakfast almost unnoticed. He was careful not to linger; and before Fred and Jimmie were ready to settle down to their lunch, he had finished and sauntered out to the prow of the boat, where he stood in the fresh morning air, and thought of his mother, and wondered how his father would do while he was gone. He fell to questioning and planning about the future. Two years more and he would be of age, and must manage somehow to get his father out of the liquor business, and lift this great stone away from the grave of his mother's joy and hope. "I can never be really tempted to drink, hard as it may be to be odd from the rest," he thought, "as long as I remember my mother, and all that she has endured these years, and all that she hopes from me. I am surprised about the Brayton boys,—I didn't suppose they would touch even home-made wine;—can't be that Mr. Brayton preaches as Mr. Windham does."

The Gazelle made good time down the river, and before sunset turned the 'Big Bend,' and the anchor was cast for the night, near the island which was to be their camping-ground.

Roy had hardly left the engine-room all day; and when at last the steam was shut off, and the heart grew still in the iron chest, and the arms hung idle, and the wheel rested in the river, he said, stroking the cylinder in a caressing way:

"Well, little Mary Mason, you have behaved beautifully to-day, and now you shall rest; and by-and-bye be polished up."

He came out on deck and shook himself, and reaching up to the upper deck, and grasping the railing firmly, he drew himself up, swinging by his arms up and down a few moments, until his muscles and nerves were rested from their confinement; and then running forward, he joined the group standing at the prow, discussing the prospects of getting out the small boat, and landing at once, or waiting until morning.

"O, I tell you, boys," said Roy, "let's go ashore and make a big fire, and carry our supper out there, and stretch our legs with a good climb into those trees. I've been cooped up all day, and feel just like it."

"Agreed!" shouted a chorus, and so it was settled; and the boat was lowered, and loaded with such things as they would need.

"Put in some 'chicken fixin's,' and a stew-pan, Dil," shouted Roy. "Get us up something hot and good, for I'm awfully hungry."

"Second the motion," said Will Knowlton.

"That's so, boys," said Dillie, good-naturedly; "you haven't had half a chance yet. Well, I'll see what I can do." And he went back to the steward's closet, and soon returned with a stew-pan, and a basket o sundries; and the first boat load started ashore.

Captain Jim declared he should be the last to forsake the ship; and ordered the mate to take command of the small boat. He also divided the company; four to go over with Harry, and select the ground, and get the fire started, while Harry returned for the remainder.

It was not far to the island, and before sunset they

were all ashore, and making the wilderness ring with their shouts, as they gathered the dry dead wood and brush into a great heap for their fire. The place chosen was at the northern point of the island, commanding a view of both banks of the river: the wide marshy flat, a place of reeds and rushes, on one side of the Big Bend; and the high perpendicular wall of rock, with the road at its base on the other. A great pyre was quickly made, and lighted; and as the flames ran up into the dry mass, and thrust their greedy tongues up toward the tops of the trees, they lighted the island and all the space of the river from shore to shore.

"This is just the place for us," said Roy, looking about, as they stopped a moment to enjoy the fire, and watch its effort to rival the sunset. "I move a vote of thanks to Will, for his selection."

"Aye, aye!" answered the boys, throwing up their caps.

Dillie made a little fire, at some distance from the pyre, for his stew-pan, and soon a savory odor came from it, that, for the time being, absorbed the interest of the entire company.

"How long before it 'll be ready, Dil?" asked Roy, lifting the cover and sniffing like an animal.

"O, a few minutes," said Dillie, wiping a bowl on his apron.

"Well, hurry up; make the minutes short."

"I'll hurry up all I can," replied Dillie, good humoredly. "But if you fellows will get out o' the way, I'll hurry faster. Or, see here! you can get things out of the basket. Wonder if it's safe to trust you?"

"Not he!" cried Archer; "I've seen him handle cookies and doughnuts before, and I know what he does with them. I'll tell you what, boys, now I'm sort o' tame; I've been 'round Dil and the things before; so you all go off, and I'll help him, and we'll call when it's ready."

"All right!" answered Roy. And throwing off his coat, tossing it on a branch, and rubbing his hands as he stepped backward, and measured a tree with his eye, he cried:

"To your trees, boys!—one,—two,—three!" And making a dash and a spring, he caught the lower branch of a great beech, and swung himself up, and was well toward the top before the other boys had really comprehended his order.

"Now, that's not fair!" cried Jimmie. "Come down, and we'll give you a try; we'll start even."

And Roy came down, and the boys picked their trees, drew off their coats, took their positions, and at the word sprang into the branches, or clambered up the trunks, and ascended like huge squirrels to the topmost boughs. Roy led the race, however, for he was perfectly at home in a tree, while the Marsdens brought up the rear, and soon gave up the effort; for they had not had the muscular training that the other boys had found, in their efforts to keep up with Roy, who was an athlete.

"This is magnificent," shouted Roy, from his perch in the top of the beech. "Just look at the fire-light on the water, and over there, on that wall of rock! And see that shadow of Dillie with his stew-pan; he looks like a giant, about a hundred feet high, and that

stew-pan is just immense: I only hope it's full of chicken stew. My! the very sight makes me ravenous. I'm going down to persuade Dil that supper 's ready. I'll try moral suasion, and if that don't work I'll,"— And gnashing his teeth in a very savage way, he dropped from limb to limb, and then to the ground, followed by the rest; and seizing Dillie, who was slight of figure, and slinging him to his shoulder, he cried:

"Will you call us to supper, or shall we eat you?"

"It's all ready but dishing," said Dillie, laughing and struggling.

"All right sir!" said Roy, setting him down gently on "all fours;" "all right!—you shall be remembered for what you have done. Dish up lively, however, young man."

The fire was replenished, by throwing brush and logs on the pile, and in a few minutes, the call to supper was made; and there was a rush and a scramble toward the steaming bowls and saucepan.

As they gathered about the improvised table, there was an instant's pause on the part of some of the boys. Roy grew grave and sat silent a moment, then looked up and caught the eyes of the Braytons. The color mounted to his brow, and he seemed more ill at ease that ever before.

"What's up, boys?" asked Captain Jim: "pitch in and help yourselves, if that's what you're waiting for."

So they each took their bowls, and began tasting, for the stew was too hot to admit of eating.

"I tell you, Dillie, you are a famous cook," said

Roy, as he tasted the savory stew that had been prepared from material provided by Mrs. Wright, and sealed in glass jars; so that all he needed to do was to put the ingredients together, and heat well, and add the crackers.

"You must thank my mother," said Dillie "She said she knew we'd want something warm to-night, when we got here, and so she made this stew, and bottled it up, and told me how to fix it."

"Well, your mother shall be thanked;—all our mothers, boys," said Roy, and a warm feeling came into his heart.

"Yes, I tell you, boys," said Archer, "if it hadn't been for our mothers, this little excursion wouldn't have amounted to much. I wish they could look in on us, or out on us, now, and see this great fire, and the river, and the steamer, and us eating like pigs."

"I tell you what, let's do," said Roy. "Let's have toasts,—a toast-master,—and drink to the health of our mothers. Did you bring the things from the boat, Dillie?"

"I set the wicker wine-case in the boat," replied Dillie.

"The glasses are in one side, then," said Jimmie, "for I put them there myself."

"Yes, here they are," said Dillie; "what shall I take out?"

"Some of my mother's wine," said Roy. Going himself to the basket, and taking out a bottle he returned with it, while Dillie brought the glasses.

"Let's wait 'till we get through eating," said Fred.

"And have the cloth removed," said Claude Marsden.

"And the ladies withdraw," said Egbert.

"O, yes; let's have it done up in style," said Willie Knowlton.

"Putting on all the agony," said Archer.

"More of your mother's chicken stew," said Roy, passing his bowl. "The more I eat of this supper, the more I appreciate the subject under discussion."

The boys talked as though they had all out-doors about them; and their loud cheery voices rang out over the water, and were gathered up in the silence that filled the space between the hills, and tossed down in a strange murmur of blended tones, a mosaic of sound, full of harmony to any ear that was in love with the human voice. But they were too busy to take into account the picturesque scene, of which they formed a part, and never will know how charming a picture they made for the passengers in an open stage, that was coming along the road, at the foot of the bluff.

A laugh from Roy rang out again over the water; and was recognized by the quick ear of Willie Briggs, who was in the stage on the way to Masonville.

"Stop a minute, driver:" he called, and as the stage halted, he put his hands to his mouth, forming a trumpet, through which he shouted:

"Roy—! O—o—o—Roy Mason!"

"What kind of a bird is that, I wonder?" said Roy as the call came to his ear.

"Hush, boys!"

All was silent, and again came the voice. Roy sprang up, and answered with a shrill whistle, and a "Aye, aye!—Hello! who is it?"

"Willie Briggs:" was the reply. "What are you doing over there, Roy?"

"Camping out,—eating supper;—where are you going?" responded Roy.

"Down to the Center, to take the train for Masonville, unless I can get over to you."

"You can: I'll come for you in the boat. Excuse me, boys. I'll take the skiff and pull over;—have some supper ready for him, Dil. He'll be a jolly addition to our crowd."

"I'll go with you Roy," said Harry.

"All right:—come on. Save the toast—have it piping hot, when we get back."

Roy and Harry were not long in rowing over to the place where Briggs was waiting, the stage having gone on, and they pulled back in the track of the fire light, and with the beautiful scene before them all the way.

The boys told Briggs all about their excursion, and the Gazelle; and gave him a very urgent invitation to join them for the week.

"Can't do that; must make a short stay," said Briggs. "But I'll spend the night, and you can row me over in time for the stage for Center, which meets the noon train: passes here about eleven, I guess. I must be in Masonville, to meet Mr. Lawton, tomorrow."

Willie Briggs was well known to the company, and

they were all down at the point of landing, to 'escort him up to the stew-pan,' as Dillie said.

"For of course you are hungry," said Roy.

"Hungry as a bear, and was going to take supper at your house; but the stage broke down, and we were late, and were going to stay all night in Center. So I'm just in luck;—what's your bill of fare?"

"Bottled chicken, tarts, cookies, doughnuts, sponge cake, fruit cake, bread, biscuit, butter, pickles, jam, toast with wine, and"—

"Hold on, boys. I believe I am equal to most anything in the eating line, but spare me the programme; I am too hungry. As to the drinking business, I'll be excused: I've sworn off again"

"Well, we'll swear you in again, after you've eaten this bowl of stew," said Roy, as he pointed him to an end of a log, and handed him a steaming bowl.

The boys helped him with prodigal generosity, until he said:

"Positively, and for the last time, no more."

"Then for the toast," said Roy. "Dillie, please pass the glasses, and I'll pour the wine." And the two passed around to the circle that stood in the firelight.

"Why, where's Harry?" said Roy, as he missed him. "H—a—a—r—r—y!"

Harry had thought he would escape the trial that was before him, by absenting himself, and so had stayed behind when they went up from the boat with Briggs, and thought he would go over to the Gazelle, and did get started. Then he thought:

"No: this course is making me a slave: it is the

part of a coward; I am not a coward. I am not a slave; I am free. I am not obliged to drink. I will take the manly course. I'll face the music to-night, define my position, and have it done with." So he turned back, slipped the ring of the boat chain over a stake, and arrived at the camp in time to respond: "Hello!" when Roy called him.

"Here, Harry,—where are you?" said Roy; "we are ready for our toasts: here's your glass, we'll drink standing,—to the best mothers that nine,—no, ten boys ever had; for Will Briggs is a boy with us to-night."

"No glass for me, Roy," said Harry, standing erect, with his hands behind him, while a strange light came to his eye, and his cheeks grew pale.

"No glass?—will you drink out of the bottle?" laughed Roy.

"No glass: no wine for me," said Harry.

"No wine for you!—what do you mean, Harry Diffenbaum?" asked Roy, in surprise.

"I mean just what I say:—no glass of wine for me."

"Explain, then!" cried Roy, flushing.

"I am not obliged to explain," said Harry. "I simply don't drink it."

"Don't drink it?" said Roy;—"then you refuse to drink this toast in my mother's wine?" and Roy's eyes flashed angrily.

"Yes:—but I will drink the toast gladly, in water, or coffee, but not in wine."

Roy stood extending the glass, the others all stood with their glasses ready. Harry looked firmly into

Roy's eyes, and noted the flash, and color of anger; and a great hot tide of feeling, strong, but tender, and even pitiful, as he remembered how he had seen the work of drink, surged up from his heart, and moistened his eyes. Roy saw this, and his own generous nature was touched to the quick; and he said, dropping the hand that held the glass:

"Well, Harry, I'm not going to quarrel with you. I don't understand you at all: you live with drink: tend your father's bar, selling it every day; and yet stand here and refuse to drink a toast to our mothers, in the pure home-made wine my mother herself made. I confess I don't understand, and feel like being mad at you; but you have a personal right to refuse, without making any one mad; so old fellow, shake hands, and let it pass.

Harry's hand grasped Roy's in a quick and strong clasp, and the tears that had moistened his eyes gathered, and trembled a moment on his lashes, and then fell on Roy's hand.

"Why, man!" exclaimed Roy, "what does this mean?"

"I cannot tell you, Roy," said Harry, turning partly about. "Boys, excuse me: I cannot tell you what it means, but I never drink,—never tasted drink in my life,—never will, so help me, God!" and Harry lifted his hat from his head, and looked up with wet eyes toward the sky; while a strangely sweet and noble expression came over his face, and a sense of awe fell upon all hearts.

In a moment Willie Briggs was at his side, having

thrown his wine to the ground; and grasping Harry's hand, he exclaimed:

"God bless you, for your courage! I understand;—and you have done more than you know, to-night You have given me courage to say 'no,' and keep the promise I made on my knees, a few days ago. I am very weak; the temptation of the cup is too much for me, always; but you have made me strong for this time.

"Come, boys," he said, turning to the group who stood silent and awe-stricken; "put up your wine. Don't drink: don't drink that toast in wine: don't drink to my mother's memory, in the wine that killed her."

The boys stood looking at him wonderingly, and after a moment, he said:

"Put up your glasses, boys, and gather about the fire, and I'll tell you about it. It's time I told you, Roy; I've started to more than once, for I've wanted to save you; but I've never had the courage to go on. But to-night I feel like a new man. Seems like the Lord has heard my prayer. I asked him to show me the way to escape, when temptation came again, and he's done it."

So the boys threw away the wine, put the glasses in the basket, and gathered in various attitudes about Willie Briggs, and he told them his story.

CHAPTER XIV.

WILLIE BRIGGS said:

"I was like you, Roy, an only child. My mother was a beautiful woman, whom everybody loved. She was small and delicate; and I was her idol. My father I never saw. He died suddenly, when I was very young, leaving plenty of money for mother and I, and one of the most elegant homes.

"I was a strong, restless boy, full of many things that my mother could not understand. She tried to keep me with her; but somehow I was always slipping away out of her reach, even when I was a very little fellow. They used to say I was like my father; at least, that was what one, who had been my father's friend, used to say, as he would pick me up and pet me, and draw me away with him from home. And this pleased me, for I thought it proved that I was in a fair way to be a man, if I were like my father. I didn't want to be a woman, nor like one; and I remember how vexed I was once, when my aunt said. "Willie, your eyes and mouth are just like your mother's." I loved my mother: but I think it was from that man that I early got the idea, that to be

manly, I must not be a 'mother-boy.' As I grew older, I got in with boys of my age, and older, who were, I know now, not at all suitable companions for me; but I did not think so then.

"My mother, I know, did not like them; nor did she like my dead father's friend; and tried to prevent him from getting influence over me; but he had a prize to win, and was not to be thwarted by a woman.

"This man had the strangest attraction for me. I know now the secret of it all. He was a bold, bad young man, who planned deliberately to rob my mother of her money, through her son, as he had tried to do through her husband. He invited me to ride and sail; would entice me from the play-ground, when I went to school, pick me up on my way to school, take me into an elegant saloon,—which I now know was his own,—would treat me to ices, confections, nice drinks, and then take me around to the academy, or the corner near home, in time, so that no complaint could be made. He made my boyhood more like a fairy dream, than like real life: the reality came all too soon. I learned to love the wine: and while I was still a boy, and before my mother dreamed of it, it had become a necessity for me. And I loved the game, into the mysteries of which my friend initiated me: and I was a slave in the gambler's power, before I had ever known what it meant to be free,—bound, hand and foot,—every impulse of my being in league with my enemy, and my mother's deadly foe.

"My mother wanted me to go to college. I had once had such a dream myself; but it evaporated, in

the hot atmosphere I breathed those days. Mother had the true idea that every boy should have an object in life; should aim to master some trade, or art, or profession: and, strangely enough, my friend approved, and early I chose that of civil engineering. I was quick to learn anything, and had a natural pasion for engineering and architecture; and had I kept a clear brain, steady nerves, and my integrity, I might stand among the first in my profession. But drink has beaten me; and at the very best, I must hold a third or fourth-rate position. I was naturally full of energy, and began to study for my profession, before I had become hopelessly entangled in vice. But I would not go to college; I had had enough of school, before I was seventeen; and before I was eighteen, had learned something of what it means to be filled with sin; and would then have been glad of a chance to have gone back to my cradle, and lived my life over. I am still a young man, boys, under thirty. and yet I have gotten all I want of life, and would gladly get out of it forever.

"I was always out nights, after I was ten, I presume; and met the worst of men, young and old; and before I had entered my teens, was noted for my daring profanity, and considered a sort of a little giant in sin. Yet I did succeed in keeping much of this from my mother. I was always at Sunday-school, and went to church with her, because she required and expected this of me; and it made a good cloak. I think she considered me a pretty good boy, those days. I said I was quick to learn, and I committed to memory the greatest number of verses from the

Bible, on several occasions, in the Sunday-school, and received the prizes. On my thirteenth birthday, my mother gave me an elegant copy of the Bible, bound in velvet and gold, with my name in gilt letters on the cover. She asked me to always carry it with me and read it daily, and I promised. I kept that prom se :—but—can I tell you how?

"Boys, as I tell you this miserable story, remember it was not Willie Briggs, but the drink that did it.

"For years I practiced carrying my mother's sacred gift with me, as she asked, and reading it in the saloons and places of sin; until 'Willie Briggs and his Bible,' became the standing joke of the vile; and I gloried in the fame it brought me. I knew it almost by heart, and would open it at random, and put my finger on a place, pass the book to some of my companions, and bid them follow, while I repeated Scripture on a wager; which was often, that if I tripped in a given time, I should buy the drinks for the crowd; and if I did not trip, the crowd must buy the drinks for me.* It was very seldom I had to buy the drinks.

"After a while I found that it was troubling my mother, that I was out nights; and I was afraid of a scene, or something, and determined to make a change in tactics. So I would stay home in the evening; and I shall never forget how she seemed to take comfort from this,—poor mother." And Briggs stopped and bowed his head on his hands, while his whole

* A fact.

frame shook. Not a sound or movement was made by the boys, and after a few moments, he continued:

"Mother always retired early, if I gave her a chance, by being at home. So I would kiss her good-night, go to my room, and get into my bed, so that it would appear to have been used. She woul often come up a few minutes, after I had gone to bed; but was not strong, and the long stair-flight did not always admit of this.

"I would always wait until I knew she was in bed: then I would get out of my window, by means of a rope ladder, I had made for the purpose, and would hasten to the saloon, and spend the night in drinking and gambling, returning early enough to make a careful toilet, and meet my mother at her late breakfast, as though I were the faithful son she believed me to be. During the day I would get over my work in some way, so as to pass with my tutor, and sleep some: and in the afternoons take mother to drive. I am glad to remember that while driving with her through the city, if I chanced to meet any of my associates in sin, I was ashamed of them, and could not bear to have them even look on my mother's face. I am glad to remember that I used to hate myself, sometimes, when I came into her presence, to know that I was her son; and once, after reading a story, of how two children had been changed in the cradle, by gossipping nurses, I thought it must be that I was just such a fraud; for I could not reconcile myself with my mother. I am always glad to recall these periods of self-loathing, for it shows me that I did have a spark of manliness, after all.

"It did not take long for vice to get the upper hand of me, under these circumstances. I was always more or less under the influence of drink; and at length, it began to come home to my mother, that her boy,—now grown to a man,—was very far from being what she had hoped and expected him to be. I am sure also, that she had been informed, by some one, of things that aroused her fears; for she began to watch me, with sad and wondering eyes;—a look that I can never forget,—but she said nothing. I began to feel that the time was at hand, when she must know the whole truth about me, and I dreaded it; but became more reckless.

"One night, I had spent the evening with her in her own room, as I always did these days; and had tried, by every art of which I was master, to reassure her, and make her feel that I was not so very bad after all; although I was sure she knew more than I had thought. My heart grew heavy with something of the sorrow of repentance, as I met her strange, sad gaze. Beside, I had become involved in gambling to an extent that, I feared, could not long be concealed. I was heartily sorry for the consequences of sin, if not for the sin itself; and I knew instinctively, that my mother must have her confidence in me restored, before I could get the money which I must have. I was then still under age. So I read to my mother, sitting at her side, on the low seat which had always been mine; and I made selections myself, which I thought would please her; but it was dreadful to know in my soul, that I was only playing a game, after all. I did know that to be true, every mo-

ment that evening: and I really hoped, sometimes, that my mother was not my dupe, and that she could read through the sham.

"Once, there came an indescribable longing to tell her all, and begin over again, where I began when I lay in her arms in my innocence. For a moment I did wish I were, in the very core of my being, what I was seeming, that hour, to be. As I read on, with these thoughts surging through me, I laid my hand over on her lap; she placed hers, cold, soft, and white as snow, upon it. Once, only, I ventured to look up, after that. Her eyes were fixed on me with the same wondering look; and her face was deadly pale, as she reclined back in her chair. I felt that she was seeking to penetrate the mystery of her son, who was beginning to reveal that he was double, and I dared not look at her again. But I knew, as I read on, that she was not listening to me, but was reading the story of my soul's pollution, as written in the lines of my face; and that she saw through the mockery of my quietude, and seeming content, as I sat at her feet, with my hand in hers. At last I could endure it no longer and with a remark about bed-time, I closed the book, put it in its place, walked a turn or two across the room, and then stopping at my mother's chair, I stooped and kissed her, as usual, and asked:

"'Can I do anything for you, mother?'

"Her eyes flashed open wide, as she lifted them to mine; her color changed; she put up her hand and touched my cheek; her lips parted a moment, then quivered; her eyes filled, and drawing my head to her breast, she kissed me again and again.

"She did not need to speak: no voice could have given emphasis to her reply to my question. It was my mother's plea for purity; then it was that the hour of my salvation came and passed. As I felt the pressure of her hand on one cheek, and the throbbing of her heart against the other, I almost resolved at once to begin to be good and true. But I had an engagement down at 'headquarters,' that night, that must be met, I thought; and then I would try to be better.

"After a while mother released me gently, kissing me again, and said:

"Good-night, my darling:—I will tell you in the morning."

"I went to my room, and dropped down on my bed in my clothes;—thinking. I was expected in the saloon, where so much time had been spent, and yet I really thought of disappointing the fellows, and staying home. But as the moments passed, the habits of my life came upon me with resistless power. I suppose I had not spent an entire evening and night at home for years, and it seemed an impossibility to do so; and in less than an hour after I left my mother's presence, I could have laughed at the things that had so oppressed me all the evening. And, arising, I prepared for going out. Being quite sure mother had retired, I descended in the usual way, and was soon with my companions.

"I was later than usual, and they had been discussing me, and telling about my wonderful feat of memory, in reciting verses from the Bible, and had made a wager of some sort. So, when I entered, I

was greeted noisily, and treated, and then asked to produce the book.

"Somehow, as I felt in my pocket for it, I almost wished it had fallen out, or in some way might be missing; for I had a strange sinking about the heart, as I thought of putting it to its wonted use that night. O, that I had listened to the voice speaking in my soul, warning me to desist from this blasphemy! Again, for a moment, I wished I were out of it all; at home, in bed, where my mother supposed I was. But I saw no way out, no way but to take a drink of brandy, to give me nerve, and go on. So I called for brandy for the crowd, and after drinking, and the liquor began to work, I was ready for anything.

"I took the Bible, and let it fall open, and put my finger on the page; and when I looked to see where it was, I was confronted by these words, in the twenty-first verse of the third chapter of Jeremiah: 'A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplication of the children of Israel; for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the Lord, their God.' The whole book of Jeremiah was at my tongue's end; and I went on over the words, which, while they were familiar, still seemed new. Every syllable seemed an arrow, and I had to call for more brandy, before I had gotten through the first ten minutes. The fellows shouted at some things which I repeated at first, but after a while, whether something in my manner, or the words themselves, awed them, I do not know; but the place became silent as the grave, as I went rapidly on. I was standing midway of the room, with my back to the

front, near the billiard-table. The fellows were all before me, and I remember I had the cue in my hand, and the one who was looking over the book was standing at the other end of the table.

"He held my Bible in his hand. I was just getting through the ninth chapter. I had repeated the words: 'Consider ye, and call for the mourning women, that they may come; and send for cunning women, that they may come: and let them make haste and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters. For a voice of wailing is heard out of Zion, How are we spoiled! We are greatly confounded, because we have forsaken the land; because our dwellings have cast us out. Yet hear the word of the Lord, O, ye women, and let your ear receive the word of his mouth; and teach your daughters wailing, and every one her neighbor lamentation. For death is come up into our windows and is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, and the young men from the streets.' As I was uttering those last words, a look which came over the faces before me, as the crowd stared beyond me toward the door, made me turn, and there, standing with her hands clasped before her, and her white lips drawn tightly over her set teeth, was my mother!—O, boys!—my mother!

"I shall never know how she came to track me to the den; for as soon as our eyes met, she threw up her hands, her white lips parted, but gave no sound; and she fell to the floor. I did not stir from my place. Others lifted her: one of the bar-tenders was

the first, I think; but in a moment I came to myself, and leaped to her, and took her in my arms. A carriage was called, and I took her home. But, boys, she never spake; she never opened her eyes again, except in the last long look into the mystery of death: and that was the end of sorrow to my mother."

Willie Briggs paused, and sat silent for some time, looking into the fire before him: while his auditors, with pale faces, and some of them with tears on their cheeks, waited.

"You think, boys, that ought to have been the end of sin with me," he resumed; "but it wasn't. I never again profaned the memory of my mother, by opening her Bible in a saloon, or repeating any of its words in the company of the wicked; but the demon, thirst, had a grip on my throat, that could not be easily broken, and I am morally weak. I did one thing for which I am glad. I took the money which came into my hands the next year, and paid up my debts: the rest did not last long. I am glad it is gone, for it did me no good. The time came when I was without money, or credit, or friends; and that was a good thing for me. I picked up my knowledge of civil engineering, and made up my mind would work, and, if possible, make a man yet. Mr. Lawton found me, and gave me a chance. I have often abused his trust, but he is always ready to do me a favor, and help me to a job."

Briggs sat silent a moment, evidently having finished his story; when Dillie aroused him by the question:

"What became of the man who gave you so many treats?"

"O, he?—he is still living, doing the same thing to other boys:—be careful that he don't get hold of you."

"Hold of me?" said Dillie.

"Yes:—hold of you!—he is not far"— But Briggs looked up at Jimmie Monroe, and turned his sentence.

"He had no use for me when my money was gone; and in fact I had none for him after that awful night. The fellow who held my Bible that time, handed it to me, as I was going home from my mother's funeral,—just as I was entering the carriage at the cemetery gate;—and so I had nothing to go back for.

"I told you, Roy, once, that I signed the pledge, and broke it. Do you remember?"

"Yes," replied Roy, without looking up. He was sitting with his elbow on his knee, and his chin on his palm, looking into the ashes, which he was poking with a stick; and there was an unusual reserve in his manner, which Briggs could but notice.

"Well," continued Briggs, "I will tell you about it for I want you boys to see how strong is the hold of the serpent in the glass, if he once coils about you. Strange as it may seem, to you, boys, all this time I had a friend,—a lovely girl—whose mother was my mother's friend from girlhood. I'll not tell you much about her: only say that after I was all alone, I had the presumption to think I might be good enough to win that girl for my wife. She was kind to me in my

loneliness: for while she knew something of my life, she did not know the circumstances of my mother's death. The things about it that would have been disgraceful to me, were not made public; and I had a great deal of sympathy from friends. About a year after, when I was nearly twenty-two, I had a talk with her about this matter, and she said she would never dare marry me as I was; but if I were the good man I ought to be, she would give me a chance.

"So I determined I would join a temperance society, and try to be the man I ought to be, that I might win her. But I broke the pledge I had taken, disgraced the order, and was suspended. I was ashamed, discouraged, hopeless. I could not see her. I wrote her a note, telling her all about it, assuring her that I was unworthy of her least thought; and have never seen or written to her since."

"Does she know where you are?" asked Archer.

"No:—I did not tell her anything about what I should do, or where I should go. I never expect to see her again. I shall never seek her. I would give the world,—my life, to be worthy of her. But I was not worthy of my mother; I killed her, and I don't want another woman's life on my soul.

"There is another thing, boys. The Bible is a curse to me:—a two-edged sword, that cuts me in pieces. I go to church, for it is the habit of my life; and I listen to the Scripture-reading, the text, and then will go on, repeating to myself the words that follow; and every chapter, every verse, has some association so vile that it curses me; it damns me.

"While the preacher is reading, or while the words of Scripture are floating in my memory, I see this or that scene in the saloon, or gambling-den, or some other place of vice; scenes that I would give the world to forget; but that I never can forget, as long s the words live that are associated with them, and hat call them up from the past. I never see the book in the railway car,—or the empty rack; I never see it on a table, but a thousand terrible and vile things come to my mind. I would gladly die, to get rid of this, but I know I cannot drop off this horror with the body. It is the soul that thinks and remembers; and these things are stamped in my soul. O, if I could only kill my soul utterly, so it could never come to life again! or, if the words of the Bible might ever mean to me what they do to any one else. If God would only speak some new, sweet word to me: if I could only find some word of His, which I had not dragged through the filth of the saloon. I have turned the pages again and again, to see if I could find some such word; but I can't yet. But still it does seem as if God had not utterly forsaken me, for he did certainly help me to-night, and did answer the prayer I made. If I can only let drink alone! If I don't let it alone, I am a dead, lost sinner before long; past hope forever. I would like,—O, I would like to see my mother again I would like to tell her how I have repented, and how near I came to staying home that night. I would like to tell her it was not her boy, but the drink that did it. And how I have protested in my own soul against going to ruin: how I have wished I could be what she hoped me to be

and then, if I could only stay in heaven long enough to tell her this, and have her hand on my cheek again just a minute, and hear her say: 'I know it, my darling,—I know it was the drink, not you, and I pity and love you forever;'—then I could go away, and never see the inside of heaven again, and be content to suffer the punishment I deserve, for my life of sin."

There was silence for some moments, after Willie Briggs had finished his story. He sat leaning forward on his elbows, and the boys were all thoroughly under the spell of the hour. The fire had burned low, and the gloom all about them was profound, relieved only by a few fitful shadows, thrown by the transient lights of the flickering flames. The river was black as ink, and the white body of the Gazelle gleamed spectral through the dark.

Roy lifted up his head once, and looked at Briggs a moment, with an expression of scorn, softened by the least touch of pity, and then resumed his former attitude, thrusting at the brands of fire with the long stick he held.

Harry Diffenbaum, with unmingled sympathy, kept his hand on Briggs' shoulder, where he had placed it with a friendly pressure, during the recital; while Jimmie Monroe, after the first trembling interest had passed, wore a look of recklessness; and at last he arose, and began piling some light brush on the fire, saying, in a flippant tone, which nevertheless did seem to cost him an effort:

"Well, let's have a little light on the subject."

And two or three of the boys joined him in mak-

ing a blaze; and as the flames kindled, and leaped up into the gloom, Briggs looked about on their faces, and asked:

"Well, boys, do you wonder that I did not like you to drink to my mother's memory, in the wine that killed her?—and that I can't bear to see you boys drink at all?"

"I don't see, for my part," said Roy, speaking for the first time, and his tone was cold as steel; "what all this has to do with my mother's wine, which she made herself. And I think, Will Briggs, that your story is horrible; and I wish, for several reasons, you hadn't told it. I am sure I am sorry for you; I should be sorry for a dog, with such a thing as that lying on his conscience. But I don't think you had any call to tell it to me, as you implied you had. I never treated my mother in that manner, and I confess, I am indignant, that you should think of my mother and I, at the same time you think of how you treated yours. A man that would, under any circumstances, do a thing like that, is,—well,—I'll not say any more, for we are out here on this island together, and you can't get away; and I hope I am not mean enough to take advantage of such a situation, to say to you just what I do think. But if you please, you need not consider yourself obliged to hold yourself up as a warning to me."

Roy had arisen, and stood before Briggs, his tall figure and broad shoulders extended to their utmost, and with a feeling in his heart, and tingling in every nerve, which brought to his face all that was noblest and strongest in his nature. He stood there, the

champion of the outraged mother upon whose heart her own son had so ruthlessly trampled, and her cause. He found no excuse for Briggs. His love for his own mother was so deep and tender, and withal so chivalrous, and he was so strong in the consciousness, that never in his life had he knowingly given his mother a pang, that he could not more than pity the man before him, as he would pity any suffering being. And he felt that he had been insulted beyond endurance, by the implication that he needed the lesson of this miserable story.

And then he thought of Mabel, and he felt a sickening disgust at the thought, that Briggs could claim to have ever loved the girl to whom he referred. Roy felt that it would give him supreme satisfaction to challenge Briggs to defend himself as best he could, while he administered the castigation which he believed he richly deserved. And yet he did pity the distress of the man he had loved. All this showed in the boy's fine and expressive face, as he stood, with all eyes upon him.

Briggs cowered abjectly on the log where he sat, before the stinging words, and more stinging glance of the boy he had so taken into his heart, and so wanted to save. He felt weak, weaker than ever before in his life; and but for the strong, sympathetic pressure of Harry's hand, he would have been unable to reply a word. But after a moment, he said:

"Well, Roy, I should have been sorry I had told you all this, if I did not know, before God, that I only hoped to do you good. And it will. You are not ready yet, I guess; but the time will come. You'll

not forget it: you may scorn me now, but, dear Roy, time will come when you will look back to this night, and understand."

"Will Briggs!" exclaimed Roy, stepping toward him, white with rage, "another word of this, and I'll throw you in the river."

The boys all drew near, and Harry arose, and stood beside Briggs, with his hand still on his shoulder, as Roy went on.

"Because you are a coward,—a dastardly son of a tender mother,—you need not judge me, or any of our crowd to be like you. Boys, you needn't be afraid I will hurt him. If he only will have a care about what he says, it's all right; but I'll not take another word of that sort. I don't want to make it so he can't stay with us to-night. I will not be mean to a fellow like him, but he must keep still now. You and I are at quits, Briggs, after daylight comes, and we can get you ashore. I never want to see you again."

"All right, Roy," said Briggs, sadly, dropping his head on his hand; "and as for spending the night, I would prefer staying here, by the fire. I should not sleep, and would prefer to be alone."

"Very well," said Roy; "if you prefer to do so, we can make you comfortable. Boys, it will be better so:—we will go over and fetch the tent, and some things."

"No, no!' protested Briggs, "don't do any such thing."

"Who will go with me to the Gazelle, to get the things?" asked Roy, without noticing Briggs.

Jimmie Monroe and Will Knowlton volunteered, and they went at once, taking a flaming pine knot from the fire for a torch. But little was spoken by those who remained. Harry again took his seat beside Briggs, but the other boys made themselves busy in gathering and piling brush and logs on the fire, and soon the whole scene was again alight from the leaping flames, and the shadows again began their play upon the bald face of the promontory across the river.

Briggs was bitterly disappointed in Roy. He loved the boy dearly, and was grieved beyond measure at the manner in which he had received the story it had cost him so much to tell; and under the depressing influence of this, the thirst for drink came again with diabolical power, and he felt himself helpless and hopeless. He sat with his head bowed upon both hands, when the boys returned.

Without noticing him, they at once began to prepare a place for the tent; and as the other boys all came to their help, it was but a few moments before the cosy little shelter was spread, and the warm robes folded within, and Briggs was informed that it was at his service.

"Let 's leave the things, boys," said Roy. "We'll want them here in the morning, and everything will be safe."

"All right," said Captain Jim; "there isn't much, anyhow, but the wine case, and dishes, and of course neither the squirrels nor Briggs will want anything there."

There was a cruel sarcasm in the tone as well as

the words, which stung Briggs to the quick; but he thanked the boys for their kindness, and turned toward the tent.

"Come to think," said Roy, "I believe I was fooled out of my drink, this evening, and I'll take it now. Come on, boys;" and he went to the basket, and filling a glass, drank it, while Briggs looked at him, with the tears blinding his vision, and every nerve of his body quivering under the half-frenzied craving for the wine that tormented him; and he turned, and entered the tent. Jimmie Monroe and the Marsdens were the only ones of the other boys that had the hardness to follow Roy in this; but the others turned and went down to the boat, where Harry had already taken his place.

"We'll go over in the order in which we came," said Captain Jim, as he and Roy came up. "Wonder if that tent is far enough from the fire?"

"O yes; there's no danger whatever, unless a wind should blow up," said Roy.

Harry took the boys over; Roy, Jimmie, Will Knowlton and Fred Brayton going in the last load; and as they went on board, he said:

"I'll go ashore, boys, and spend the night. I think I'd better look after the tent; it is rather near the fire."

He made this excuse, but he had intended from the first, to return and stay with Briggs.

"All right, Harry," said Captain Jim. "Perhaps you'd better."

"Well, good-night, boys. I'll row over for you in the morning;" and Harry turned the boat, and pulled back to the island.

"I don't believe he went back for fear of the fire, but to stay with Briggs," said Roy. "They understand each other; I could see that all the time."

"Now see here, boys," said Frederick, speaking for the first time, "I understand somewhat, I think; and you were too awful hard on Briggs, Roy."

"Why didn't you say that before Briggs, then?" asked Roy, flashing up at Fred. "Why didn't you take his side then, and not wait until it will do him no good?"

"You'd better cool off, Roy," said Frederick, quietly. "I'm not going to quarrel with you, and you are too hot to talk soberly, so we'll drop the subject."

"All right," said Roy.

"And let's drop Briggs, and his story, and the whole business, and go to bed," said Captain Jim.

"And I move," said Will Knowlton, "that we don't let the matter come up again while we're out; it'll just spoil everything; let 's lay it on the table till Christmas,—or never."

"I say never," said Jim.

"No:—there are some things I'd like to talk over, in a candid and friendly way," said Frederick.

"So would I," said Archer.

"And I," said Dillie.

"And I," said Egbert Marsden.

"Wonder how Harry 'd vote on it?" said Archer.

"O, he'd vote on your side," said Will Knowlton.

"Then let's lay it over till Christmas;—I second the motion," said Frederick.

"Do you hear the motion before the house?" said

Captain Jim. "All in favor of laying Briggs and his story on the table till Christmas, say 'aye.'

"Aye," shouted the boys, all together.

"The 'ayes' have it, I'm sure," said Jimmie. "Christmas we'll carve, and serve hot with brandy sauce;—and now to bed."

The blankets were soon unrolled, and each boy wound himself up, and took the place chalked off for him on the cabin floor, and silence reigned on board the Gazelle.

Roy was silent enough, but he did not sleep for a long time. Many and strange were the thoughts that filled his brain, and the emotions which burned in his heart. There intruded many of the suggestions and questions concerning the wine of his home, and of the Bible; and they were disposed of again as they had always been, by the fact that his mother made and offered it, and his pastor drank and praised it. His mother was his one oracle; the embodiment of all that was true, and wise, and Christian. Anything his mother did or sanctioned, was beyond the range of criticism or reproach: and yet, Willie Briggs had made a direct attack on the usages of his mother's house After he had shared her hospitality, an drank the wine she had poured, and been counted a a friend, he condemned her; and had pre-supposed that he, Roy Mason, was going to do as he had done: turn dastard, and kill his mother. His indignation grew, until it was impossible to quietly endure it, and he thought:

"It is well for Briggs that he staid ashore." And

he arose, went out on deck, and standing at the stern, looked toward the island.

It was a lovely but weird scene upon which he gazed. The fire was burning fitfully,—sometimes it would smoulder, while great masses of smoke rolled upward; and then, as the fuel would shift and settle, the flames would dash upward, and dance and brighten the forest, and flush the river again.

The white tent nestled down in the gloom, and the dark background of the bald hill was figured with many fantastic shadows.

As Roy stood thus, watching the scene, he saw a man creep out from the tent, and go to the basket of wine, and take out a bottle, and hold it a moment, as though trying the stopper; and then suddenly drop it back in its place, and walk hastily toward the fire. It was Briggs.

He stood there with the light on him, clasping his hands before him, as if in agony. He lifted his face to heaven, and, as the fire brightened, Roy could detect the expression of despair on his countenance. Then he saw him drop on his knees, and remain statuesque; with his face upturned, his left hand on his brow, and his right extended upward, as though to get hold of something above him.

The boy's heart was touched.

"Poor Briggs," he said. "He has a load to carry. I ought not to add anything to it: but I don't want him ever to come near me again."

As he looked, he saw Harry come out of the tent and glance hurriedly around, then move quickly to-

ward the fire, and in a moment more, spring to Briggs' side, and kneel.

"I'm glad Harry went over; I'm glad I saw this; it makes me feel better," said Roy. "Two nights away from home,—from mother. She prayed for me: I will pray for myself: I need to." And Roy knelt and prayed, and much of the bitterness of his heart was removed, and he felt that he could almost forgive Briggs.

Of what it cost Briggs that night to drop that bottle of wine, and the battle he fought out on his knees as he and Harry bowed together, Roy as yet knew nothing.

Roy went back to his cot. He slept fitfully, and arose early in the gray dawn, and looking out he saw Harry returning from the further side of the river, in the skiff, alone; and a man whom he knew to be Briggs, walking slowly along the wagon road toward Center.

Harry saw Roy as he came toward the Gazelle, and rowed alongside.

"Good morning, Harry," said Roy, soberly; "been taking an early row, I should think."

"Yes: Mr. Briggs wanted to get over to the road, so I took him. He left this for you." And Harry took a note from his breast pocket.

"I will come to you," said Roy. "The other boys are all asleep yet. Tired out, about. We'll go over to the island."

So Roy joined Harry in the skiff, and taking the note, read:

"*My Dear Roy:*—For such you are to me, although you despise me: I only want to ask you to believe that the motive which led me to tell you the story of my life, was a pure one. I shall not ask you to remember me, for I know you cannot forget. You carry with you something which will keep me, and my story, in mind. And sometime we may meet again, when I shall be able to prove to you how dear you are to me, and how true are some of the things I have said to you.

"Roy, I pray you, let the wine alone. This would be my word to you, if I were going right from you to answer before God, and my mother. Let the wine alone, for it is a 'mocker:' at the last it does bite.

"One thing more, I must tell you. Let Theodore Monroe alone; he is the man who wrought my ruin.

"God bless you, Roy,

"WILLIE BRIGGS."

"P. S.—I could not stay to meet your scorn again: good-bye."

"Do you know what's in this note, Harry?" asked Roy, with a flush on his cheek.

"No:" said Harry.

"Then read it;" and Roy placed it in Harry's hand. Harry read it, and as he finished and returned it, he ejaculated:

"Monroe! Is it possible?—yet I can believe it. and Roy, that's all so; true as the Bible: 'wine is a mocker.'

"Perhaps so:—the kind you sell;" said Roy, hotly

"But Harry, this is a forbidden subject: we shal quarrel. I've got sort o' cooled off, and you must let me alone. We all agreed last night, we'd lay this whole thing on the table till Christmas. Briggs is not to be mentioned; it will spoil all our fun. We'll go ashore and get a big fire going, for the air is chilly a little, and then go over and make a racket, and get the fellows out.

CHAPTER XV.

THE time passed a little slowly on the island. The boys were not professional sportsmen, and whether the Gazelle frightened the ducks or not, they did not find much shooting waiting to be done. Roy was too restless to make a good fisherman, and although Jimmie was called Captain, yet Roy was the leader, and nothing really received favor which he did not enter into, somehow.

At night, when they built up the fire and gathered around it, the ghost of the tabled story would come in, and flit before them in the flames, or lurk behind them in the shadows. And whenever the wine glasses were filled, its wierd and unwelcome presence was felt. Roy began to think of Briggs' words, and believe it true that he could never forget. Then Dillie was not a French caterer, who could make "mush out of moonshine," as Roy said, and when the stores began to get stale, these hearty boys began to long for mother's table ; and before the week was up they talked of going home.

"But it wont do to go too soon, boys," said Roy, "or we shall never hear the last of it." So they

decided to stay until Monday, which would be the seventh day.

The boys made some effort to observe the Sabbath; bringing out their books; keeping a great roaring fire, for which the fuel was gathered on Saturday; and with the assurance that it was the last day, they got along with something like enjoyment. Frederick and Claude were appointed readers, and Roy chorister, and they each performed the duties of their offices with credit to themselves and to the pleasure of all.

In the evening they gathered, after rather a tantalizing supper, and Jimmie said: "I tell you, boys, I've got a splendid plan; let's have a club: the Gazelle Club, or something, to meet in our cabin, or, father 'd let us have a nice room, and we'll have jolly times this winter."

"Agreed!" said Roy; "we wont want to break up our ship's company when we get home, and the Gazelle goes into winter-quarters. Let's call it the Ship's Company Club."

"Splendid!" cried Egbert Marsden.

"How often shall we meet?" asked Archer.

"Once a week," said Jimmie.

"Monday night," suggested Dillie.

"All right; let's organize to-night," said Willie Knowlton.

"What do you say, boys? Captain, I move we organize the Ship's Company Club."

"Second the motion," shouted Archer.

"You hear the motion, gentlemen," said Captain Jim, arising; "are there any remarks?"

"Mister Presi-captain," said Frederick, rising, "I am in favor of the bill, and would like to explain my vote. I believe that the property of the growing city of Masonville, with its mines and manufactories; its houses and churches and schools; its hotels and hostlery, and its shipping and railroads;—its—its—ahem,—tell me something else to put in, boys."

"Forests," suggested Will.

"Mills," said Dillie.

"Hen-roosts," added Archer.

"Saloons," said Egbert.

"Yes," continued Fred, with a grand flourish. "Its everything,—demand,—I repeat it, sir, demand the organization of this club. Why, Mr. Presi-captain and gentlemen of the jury, if we the citizens of this republic should fail in the duty of the hour,—the—the—yes sir, the very river would stand on its head, and the heavens rain clubs, with which to beat, pound, maul, and — and — I repeat it, pound and maul every recreant son of our fair city. Therefore, gentlemen, I adjure you to stand by the ship."

"Hear! Hear!" shouted the boys, as Fred subsided, amid loud applause.

"Any further remarks?" asked the captain. Cries of "Question, question," came in reply.

"All in favor of the motion, say aye," said the captain.

"Aye!" shouted the boys, throwing up their hats.

Thus was begun the club, that was to make itself felt in more homes than those represented at its nauguration.

Monday morning the boys were up early, and all

was ready for a start long before day ; and they started up the river by the light of the old moon, for they were in a hurry to get home.

Mary Mason had been very restless, and anxious for the last few days, and especially on the Sabbath : and was often at the window that commanded a view of the river. On Monday afternoon she took her work-basket, and sat constantly on the watch ; and just about sunset, she caught sight of the little plume of vapor, tinted with amber and gold, and in a moment more the shrill whistle of the Gazelle rang through the space between the hills, and brought all Masonville to their doors.

John Mason was at the barn. He hastened down to tell Mary that her boy was coming, and found her busy with preparations for a hearty supper of such dishes as she knew Roy would relish.

It seemed a long time before he came, but at last she heard his ringing voice answering his father's call from the gate, and in a moment more he came bounding to his mother, as she stood on the porch ; and as he lifted her off her feet in his strong arms, he exclaimed :

" Oh, mother, have you got something good to eat ? I'm awfully hungry."

That evening, after prayers, Roy went to his room with a sense of comfort and appreciation of his home, such as he had never known : and he was glad, as never before, to hear his mother's step on the stair : but for some reason, he suddenly resolved to tell her nothing about Briggs or the club.

Mary Mason came in, and took her accustomed

seat beside Roy, as he recounted the adventures and incidents of the trip, with the feeling, however, all the time, that he was keeping back something which he ought to tell.

"How did you spend Sunday, my son?" asked Mrs. Mason.

"O, in a quiet sort of way," said Roy. "We didn't get up until most noon, for we were awfully tired, and there was nothing to do all day but read, and sing, and talk. We made a big fire, and Fred and Claude read.—Fred is a splendid reader, mother, and I think, after all, we enjoyed Sunday about as well as any day."

"What did you read?"

"Well, first we read a Bible lesson;—for we knew,—that is, most of us, that that was the way the folks at home would like us to begin. We read the story of Naaman;—then we sung a while;—then Archer read the 'Log of the Gazelle.' I tell you, mother, it was interesting; he wrote up our doings pretty well; and then we got out our books and made selections. I had my 'Tennyson,' and Fred read in 'Idyls of the King;' and we got interested. I didn't think we'd like it at first,—for we fellows aren't much for poetry but Fred said he knew we'd like it, so we let him read a while, and then voted that he should go on."

"How did you like the 'King Arthur?'" asked Mary Mason.

"Splendid!" replied Roy, heartily. "I think he was just grand."

"Did it occur to you what makes him so grand?"

"I don't know: — I haven't thought; — only I know he was;" said Roy, slowly.

"Was it simply because he was a king?"

"No, I think not, — though that was one thing, of course;" replied Roy.

"Yes," said his mother, "but King Arthur would have been just as grand under any circumstances; — in the dress of a peasant; with a spade in his hand instead of a sceptre. King Arthur's glory was in that he was a pure man. And you may take the greatest man of this or any age, tell all you know about him, that makes him great, and when you have gone over the list of his distinguishing qualities, if you can add, 'he is a pure man,' you have crowned him. But, if when you have spoken of his statesmanship, his eloquence, of his great intellect, and his generous heart, you have to add, 'but he is an unclean man;' then, although the world may have crowned him king, yet is his fine gold become dim; and his diamonds are but as the common stones of the roadside; he might better have never been known, for the sake of his own fame.

"In the story of Naaman, you have the same truth. He was a great man, and an honorable. But when you read that he was a leper, you turn away in disgust; you want nothing more of Captain Naaman: and you wonder why he is not sent off with other lepers, into the wilderness. And you are never reconciled to him, until you read how, after he had submitted to the voice of God, 'he was clean.' And in this fact, that he was made clean, was his glory, after all."

"I thought of that same thing, mother, in a vague sort of way, while Fred was reading," said Roy; "though I couldn't have said it as you have. And mother, I intend to be a good man. I'd rather die, than know that I would ever be like Wi— Naaman. I do want to be good: but sometimes its awful hard: and sometimes I have been afraid I should, after all be something that I wouldn't be for the world."

"Of course it's hard, my dear boy," said Mary Mason, as she laid her hand on his cheek "You have a strong nature; a strong will of your own; and then, Roy, you have not been born again; you have the heart of a sinner. The only way to be good, as you say, is to give yourself entirely to your Heavenly Father, and let him put his Spirit into you."

In an instant, there flashed into Roy's memory, the verse from Ephesians, which had so impressed him once, that he never forgot it. "Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." It just flashed upon his thought like lightning from the heaven of God's truth, and then passed.

His mother continued:

"You have been dedicated to God, my son, in prayer; but the time has come when you must pray for yourself, or it will avail nothing. We have given you to God, but you must devote yourself to him; and oh, Roy, I have been looking so earnestly for this. I want you to be a Christian, a man of God, in the truest sense of the word."

"Well, mother," said Roy, "I expect I shall be sometime, don't you?"

"I do indeed, my darling," replied his mother. "I should not have the pleasure in your strength, your power, that I have, if I thought it was all to be spent for the world, and wasted in sin. But you are always putting this matter off:—don't do it any longer, Roy, dear; give it your first and best thought. 'Seek first the kingdom of God,' you know."

Mary Mason knelt and prayed that night, with a heart lighter than it had been in many a day; for somehow it seemed to her, that Roy had let her words down into his heart, in a sense in which he had not done in a long time; and that he had almost pledged himself to be a Christian; and she was rejoiced to believe that he had come home from his trip, just as truly her boy, as he went away. And she kissed him, and went down with a deep joy in her heart.

But Roy did not like the feeling of the secret which he was hiding. He wished he had told her frankly about Briggs, shown her his note, and told her about the club. He thought he would in the morning.

He could see no reason why he should not, and yet he somehow felt sure it would interfere with the club, if she knew how Monroe had been related to Briggs and his life of sin. She did not like him now, she disliked Jimmie, and this did make it hard for him to think of telling her.

With these things vexing his brain, he fell asleep, and passed the night in dreamland, in the midst of strange scenes and shapes. One dream he remembered in the morning, and it annoyed him greatly. He dreamed he was on the Island alone, in the night. The fire had burned down, and the gloom was pro-

found. He took a long stick, and gave the smouldering logs a turn, and a volume of smoke, with detached tongues of flames clinging to its folds, arose in a great pillar into the sky, and then began to assume, slowly, a shape; first it was a great demon, and the flame fragments moved into the places for eyes, and tongue, which protruded from great, open jaws. It changed slowly, as he gazed, horror stricken, and took the features of Monroe. Then, as it still changed, and shrunk in size, it presented the sad, anguished face of Briggs; his lips moved, and the fire-bitten tongue seemed to say:

"I pray you, Roy, let the wine alone — it is a mocker." Then again it changed to the form of a woman, and he knew he saw before him the mother of Willie Briggs. She had a look of horror on her face; she dropped at his feet, and as he sprang to lift her up, he beheld the form of his own mother. He was chilled to the bone, and tried to scream, and did utter an unearthly groan that awakened him. He turned over, and lay awake a long time, with the dread presence before him; and again he became angry at Briggs for his story, and its strange influence over him.

"Why should I care," he said, at last, giving the bed-clothes a jerk, that brought them up from the foot. "What is it to me, that he was a drunkard and a gambler, and profaned his mother's Bible and killed her? I'll go to sleep again, and forget it."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE following days were spent in pleasure-seeking, among the boys and girls of Masonville, on board the Gazelle; and Roy had Mabel's company, while he made his engine 'perform,' as she called it, and he gave her a history of their life on the island, not excepting the part about Briggs, only he did not tell her how Monroe was implicated.

He was a good deal surprised to see how the great heart of the little woman was moved by this story, and how she sympathized with Briggs.

"If I ever see him," she said, "I'm going to tell him how sorry I am for him."

"I would rather you wouldn't say anything to him about it, Mabel, or ever speak to him," said Roy.

"I shall do as I please about that, sir," laughed the girl; but Roy, for some reason, did not feel like making a reply.

"And I'm going to give Mr. Monroe a scolding," she continued.

"Mabel," exclaimed Roy, "please don't say a word about this to any one but Briggs, or I shall be sorry I told you;—please don't, Mabel."

Mabel laughed again, the clear sweet note that was peculiar to her voice, and said:

"I didn't know you were afraid of anything, Roy,—but you are:—I've found out. It's a girl's tongue. But," she added, as she saw how really distressed he was, "I will be good, and if it's a secret, I'll take good care of it."

"Thank you," said Roy, "that's a dear girl; it is a secret; —and now I'll tell you something that isn't such a great secret,—we've organized a club."

"Who has?" asked Mabel.

"We boys; and we meet on Monday night."

"What sort of a club?" persisted Mabel.

"O, a boy's club; our Ship's Company;—and that's the name of it, and we're going to have fun."

"Why don't you let the girls in?" asked Mabel again.

"'Taint hardly the place for girls, I guess," said Roy; "but I'd like it better, I presume, if it was."

"I've heard of clubs," said Mabel, "and somehow I don't just like them; but maybe yours will be the good kind."

"We'll see to that, Mabel," said Roy, and changed the subject; for somehow Mabel seemed like a sort of reproving spirit to the boy that day, and he was not at ease.

The evening came for the club to meet. Roy had not spoken to his mother, but after supper, he said:

"Mother, the Gazelle boys have a little business this evening, and I shall have to be away a while: I'll not be gone long:—back by bed-time, I guess."

Mary Mason had just started for the pantry with a

platter; she turned back and looked up at her son, and said:

"I do hate to have you out evenings so, Roy. Couldn't it be done before night?"

"Not very well, mother," said Roy, a little faintly, for there was something in the affair that did not harmonize with his frank spirit. But he continued:

"And we have agreed to meet to-night,—and it's too late now to make a change,—and then, you know, Fred and Claude start back to college in a few days, and we boys wanted to be all together once, before they went."

"If I had known about this in time, Roy," said his mother, "I would have invited them all here; you could have had a nice time."

"That would have been splendid, mother," said Roy, with a bright look. "If we had only thought in time," he began, and then stopped; for he was conscious of untruth in his soul, and he could not go on, but turned away toward the window, and whistled a strain. Then he said:

"Say, mother, I would like to ask the boys here sometime. Can I?"

"Certainly, my son; I would much prefer havin them come here to having you go away."

"Well, mother," laughed Roy, "if all the boys' mothers think the same thing, your invitation wouldn't do much good, and we'd all stand a chance of staying at home."

"And that's the place for boys or men at night, as a rule," replied his mother. "I don't object to your going for a reasonable time to the neighbors of an

evening, once in a while; but there is always something about this 'out-at-night' business, that fills me with dread."

"Well, I'll try to be home early," said Roy.

"Where do you meet?"

"At the hotel," replied Roy, knowing his mother would not approve.

"I do not like you to go there of an evening, Roy," said Mary Mason, decidedly.

"It's a nice place, mother," said Roy. "All the best men go there: Mr. Marsden, and father, and Mr. Knowlton; and the town board always meet there."

"Yes, I know that," replied his mother. "The place is nice enough; it's the man that keeps it. I don't like him."

"I know it, mother," said Roy, "but you needn't be afraid: we boys are going to have a room by ourselves, and talk awhile, and then come home. I'll run now and do up my chores. Come, Nap, old fellow. We are to be there at eight o'clock."

Roy ran out, followed by his dog, feeling that he was doing a mean thing after all, and wishing somehow that the club had never been thought of.

"But then," he thought, "here I am, almost a man; as large as father; and I think I ought to know enough to take care of myself, if I am ever going to. Wish I had a sister for mother while I'm away. She hasn't anybody but me, that's the trouble; and I s'pose she's lonesome, seeing father goes down there every night. Shouldn't think he would: if I had a wife now,—when Mabel and I have a home,"—and the

boy's face grew tender and noble, "I'd no more go out in the evening than nothing; but all boys must get out somehow; it's in them, and I s'pose all mothers feel the same way: I must be awfully good to mother to make up for it, though. It must be hard to be a woman, and have a boy like me, and no girl for company."

Roy hurried up his chores; went in and kissed his mother, and ran down the hill, leaving the dog at the gate, for he had been trained never to leave the premises unless he went with the team.

Mary Mason did not even say, "Come home early," to Roy; for she felt bitterly that Roy had gone away that night as he had never done before, and her heart was pained. She sat down by the window and watched the incoming train, as it glided along the old meadow that had been all broken up with town lots, and stopped at the depot. She glanced over the busy village.

"I don't know," she thought, "but more came in after all with the railroad than I bargained for. No: the railroad's all right, but there is so much to entice a boy. Yes, it is because I am a woman, I suppose. I must not let it worry me. Roy must mingle with men, but home is the place for any man at night if he has one; and I don't think John does right. His business as trustee don't require so many evenings a week, and John does not seem the same."

The fact was that John Mason was growing fonder of the wine. He drank more at home, and he was getting to feel that he had not quite rounded up the day, if he did not go down to Monroe's and have a

glass of something with Mr. Marsden, and the others, who gathered in the elegant little room, that had been fitted up for and appropriated by, the town board for their meetings. And it had become quite the thing for them to gather there of an evening, and talk, and tell stories, and crack jokes over their wine and toddy.

John Mason was a genial man, and a little wine or brandy made him a great talker; and he would sit and tell about early days in that country, to a company of a dozen men, by the hour. He was sometimes a little querulous, and his stories grew stale after a while; but he held valuable property in his hands; and Mr. Marsden had long coveted it, and looked upon John Mason's stubborn hold of it as in the way of the capital he wanted to invest right there; and he had determined, that by some means, he would get the title to that farm transferred to himself. He was willing to pay a speculator's price, and he looked upon Mr. Monroe's brandy as a valuable auxiliary in this effort. Therefore, while he drank little himself, he helped John Mason along the slippery path of moderate drinking, and listened to his stories, and flattered the old man's little vanity, until he came to believe that Mr. Marsden was his one appreciative friend; and he went regularly to meet him, for a little while after supper, at the hotel. And thus Mary Mason was alone; and a cloud rested upon the light of the cheerful living-room of the farm-house.

The boys were on time that night, excepting Harry Diffenbaum. He had told his mother the whole story of the excursion, and the organization of the club;

and she had advised him to have nothing to do with it.

Jimmie received the boys in the bar-room, and led the way to a pleasant little parlor, fitted up for private parties, with a couple of small tables for cards or refreshments, easy chairs, and good pictures. The boys were followed soon by Mr. Monroe, who shook hands with each heartily, and bade them make themselves perfectly at home, and have a good time. The boys disposed themselves about the tables, and began to talk up plans.

"Now, what are we going to do in our club?" asked Willie Knowlton.

"Have a good time," said Jimmie.

"Yes;—but what kind of a good time? We must have some plan."

"I'll tell you, boys," said Archer. "We must have a constitution, and a plan, as Willie says. My mother asked me what we are going to do down here to-night, and I told her I didn't know; but were going to make some plan."

"Make it a sort of Lyceum," said Frederick; "read, have essays, music, and 'spout,' as we do at college in our class societies."

"I think that's a good idea," said Roy; and he thought, "I don't believe mother would object to that."

"Let's learn pieces, and act them out," said Dillie.

"First, boys," said Willie, "let's have everything done ship-shape, and as Archer says, have a constitution; and I move that the clerk be instructed to draw up such a document, and present it at our next meeting."

"Second the motion," said Roy, tilting back in his chair.

"All in favor say 'aye,'" said the chairman.

"Aye," shouted the boys.

"Carried;" said Jimmie, "for I saw you all shout. The clerk is so instructed. And now, what shall we do to-night?"

"Sing," said Dillie.

"Tell stories," said Archer.

"Both," said Willie.

"Debate," said Fred.

"All of it," suggested Roy; "that is, if it don't take too long. I must be home early."

"Won't your mother let you stay?" asked Jimmie, in a bantering tone.

"None of that, Jim," cried Fred, who saw Roy's eyes flash.

"That's so," said Willie Knowlton; "we'll none of us stand that."

"I don't see what there is to get mad about," said Jimmie.

"Well, we'll put it in the constitution somewhere, so you can find out," said Archer. "You're too apt to do such things, for our good, as a ship's company if you are captain."

"I was only in fun," said Jimmie; "but Roy's mother is so careful of him, I really didn't know but she would object to his staying out late."

"Some of our mothers might object," said Willie Knowlton; "my mother is careful."

"We may just as well have it understood from the first, boys," said Roy, speaking for the first time

"that we have mothers, and fathers, to report to—and arrange accordingly. I shall not go into anything that starts out to ignore this; and another thing—all that sort of banter is to be let alone; I won't stand it, for my part, from any fellow—not a minute."

There had been something peculiar in the attachment of Roy and Jimmie, for each other, from the first; they were always sparring, and yet wanted to be together. Roy was quick, and Jimmie rash and selfish, to a degree that made him constantly provoke those with whom he associated. And Fred had often acted as peacemaker between them. Jimmie was always the first offender. Roy never provoked people; and he was magnanimous to an offender, if he could find any chance to be so. So he "swallowed his anger," after a moment, and reaching out his hand, said:

"And now, Jim, let's not quarrel—but have a good time for a little while, and then go home."

"All right, old fellow," said Jimmie, striking Roy's open palm with his, and then giving him a grip that almost made even him flinch, and asked:

"What shall the good time be?"

"A story," said Archer.

"All right, a story let it be; who shall tell it?"

"Fred and Claude for a song," said Roy, "for they will be gone next week."

"That's so," said Captain Jim. "And"—

They were interrupted by a tap on the door, and the entrance of a young man in a long white apron, bearing a tray of glasses and bottles.

"All right, Frank," said Jimmie; "put it here or

the table. You may draw the corks. Boys, this is Frank Benton; hasn't been here long, but he'll know just how to pour out a glass of wine for you any time. But he is an awfully sober boy,—never laughs," and Jimmie slapped him on the shoulder. The young man smiled, and drew the corks.

"You are a sober fellow now, aren't you, Frank?" persisted Jimmie.

The young man flushed slightly, and replied:

"That depends on circumstances;" and turned toward the door.

"Stay, Frank," said Jimmie, "and have a glass with us. You're a good fellow, anyhow: they'll get along without you for a few minutes. Take off your bib, and join us for a drink.—Say, boys, we were cheated out of our toast that night, on the island; and I propose we have it now."

"Thought that wasn't to be taken from the table until Christmas," said Roy.

"The toast isn't *that*," replied Jimmie. "We'll drink the toast, and so go back to where we began, in good fellowship. Drink standing, to 'the best mothers nine boys ever had;'—I believe that was the way it was put."

"Excuse me, boys," said Frank, hastily setting his glass on the stand; "guess they're calling me." And he picked up his apron, and dashed out into the hall.

"Dear me!" ejaculated Roy. "Did you see how white he was?—wonder what's up with him?"

"Well, never mind him," said Jimmie, impatiently. "Let's drink the toast before anything else happens Frank's a queer fellow, anyhow."

The glasses were drained and refilled, and the boys seated themselves to listen, and drink at their leisure.

The story was told, and the song sung; followed by riddles and conundrums, mingled freely with wine. And thus the evening passed, and the boys were all more or less under the influence of the poison when they started for home, Archer and Dillie especially. Roy went home with Dillie, after they left Archer and Fred.

Fred was vexed that Archer should be so nearly drunk, and was afraid the fact would be discovered before he could get him into their room; but he was favored in this, by the fact his mother was not well, and had retired; and his father simply spoke to them as they passed up-stairs.

Dillie's mother had always, from her childhood, been used to having the men of her home coming in with unsteady steps; and so he got in without much notice.

Roy felt the wine, but did not show it enough to excite remark. But he fell asleep that night while his mother was talking with him.

"Poor boy," she said, "he is very tired." And she kissed him and went down.

CHAPTER XVII.

ROY had no especial steady employment, no regular outlet for his energies. He was expected to run his engine for the parties of sporting men, who, at that season, thronged the Monroe House. And he found real delight in this, as well as occupation. But to do this did not require Roy Mason. It took his time, and some skill;—but this was not all he had to give. He should have been put to some work that would have made a demand upon his resources, which he would have felt, and compelled him to draw upon his reserves. He was a grand specimen of the race, naturally; a magnificent beginning of a man, going to waste. Sometimes Roy got a glimpse of the truth himself, and but for the foreign element out of the cider barrel, and the wine glass, that was neutralizing his power, the probabilities are, he would have made a way for himself to the life and work which was beckoning him from the distant, dim future.

One day, as he was lounging over the side of the Gazelle, in his engineer's blouse, thinking about these things, he saw Mr. Lawton step from the train, just in from the North. He had been gone for a long

time, and the boy was glad to see his friend, and shouted his name, and came leaping over the plank to meet him.

"Why, how do you do, Roy?" said Mr. Lawton, grasping his hand, and slapping him on the shoulder.

"Splendid: and glad to see you," said Roy, heartily. "Going to be home long?"

"No, only a few days; just to look after things a little. What are you doing these days?—running your boat?"

"Yes:" said Roy. "But the season is about over; don't know what I shall do then. Wish I had something larger than that. It's rather too much like play for me now."

"Well, I guess you are about right;" said his friend, measuring him with an admiring eye.

"Wish I had something that I'd have to work to do," said Roy.

"Yes,—yes,—I see;" said Mr. Lawton, adding: "Well, Roy, I'm in a great hurry now, but we must talk about this. You must make something, Roy; you're man enough to make your own place, and fill it. Look about you, and get at something. Good-bye now,—I'll see you again." And Mr. Lawton walked away, saying to himself:

"I wish I could lend John Mason my eyes. That boy is spoiling for something that will fill him with work. It's going to be too late soon. He'll be starting off after something, or get into mischief: something must be done about it."

But Mr. Lawton's time was very short at home,

and in the pressure of many demands, the matter slipped along, and was forgotten.

The club became an established thing. Mary Mason objected at first, when Roy at length told her about it. But, as he gave her to understand that it was to be a sort of lyceum, she was comparatively at rest about it, although she could not be reconciled to the late hours. She fretted about this at first;—for, in spite of promises to be home early, it was often late;—so that Monday night came, to be the dread of her life.

She found, after a while, that she could accomplish nothing by fretting; she must either tell Roy he could not go, or be quiet. She felt that he was too large to command in such a peremptory fashion, so she grew silent about it, hiding the pain away in her heart, which was growing heavy with the burdens laid upon it by her love. She was sometimes so anxious about her husband, that she almost forgot Roy. For of late, several times, John Mason had stayed down-town so late, and was so out of sorts when he came home, that he would go directly to bed, without the chapter, and song, and prayer. The family altar was, to her, a sacred necessity, and she could not bear its neglect. And then, John was not the same to Roy. He was, sometimes, almost harsh, and once there were words between them, such as should never pass between father and son. Both had been intoxicated the night before;—although Mary Mason did not know it;—and were in no state of body or mind to bear with each other; and she was cut to the very soul, by the tones and words which were so strange to the spirit of her home.

And Roy had seemed changed since that, and had been out so late several times, that she had to give up the old-time talks.

She never went to bed and left him out, and would always follow him to his room; but sometimes it almost seemed the most empty of forms, for he was often asleep before she had arisen from her knees, beside his bed.

Long were the evenings that Mary Mason spent alone that winter; and sad grew the days; for she saw, one by one, the quiet domestic joys which had made her life so blest, slipping away, and a change like that of the season from summer to winter, was coming over her world.

And Mary Mason was not the only mother whose heart was being bruised by the club. Indeed, Mrs. Monroe was the only one among them whose life was in no wise disturbed. Jimmie had never treated her with respect, and she made no attempt to follow or direct him, but gave herself entirely to her house, her daughter, and society. She treated her husband with perfect indifference, in return for unkindness; and her son with neglect, in return for disobedience, and the contempt which he had learned of his father so she was out of the reach of the club.

Mrs. Brayton was troubled about both her boys. Fred was not making the standing at school that they had expected, and she was grieved, and his father offended. Archer was becoming very wild and reckless; and she had asked her husband to look after him a little more closely; but he had replied:

"'Boys will be boys;' he is lively, and has some

wild oats to sow. He'll be all right. I'd like him to get it out a little before he goes to school, and not make a failure of it as Frederick bids fair to do. He's always with Roy."

Mrs. Brayton always saw Roy at his best, and considered him a safe friend. He was to her an impersonation of strength, courage, good humor, and real manliness. He often came for an evening with the family, and it was an understood thing that Mabel and he were especial friends. Had she not been a woman, and Archer's mother, she might have heard the truth. There were those who knew that the 'ship's company,' was fast budding into an association of gamblers, and that nearly every night they met, some of their number became too much intoxicated to get home without help, and were taken care of until sobered enough to make an appearance; when, if necessary, some excuse would be made that would bridge over the matter for the present.

Had not John Mason been carrying a brain partly cooked with alcohol, he would have seen the danger. Had not Mr. Brayton been so completely in the power of the deceiver, bound by the lust of popularity in his office, he would have known, and sounded the alarm from his pulpit; awakened the sleepers, and saved the lost. But while he preached 'temperance in all things,' and 'moderation,' he did not believe, he said, in total abstinence and prohibition. His sons knew this, and this teaching was like seed sown, which was bringing forth an hundred fold in their lives and habits. Fred at college, and Archer at Masonville, were practicing their father's preaching

Had not Mr. Marsden, deacon, banker, brewer, distiller, and president of the mining company, as well as the town board, had so much money at stake in the liquor business, he might have discovered the signs of ruin, and done something about it, for the sake of his own sons.

Mr. Knowlton was an easy farmer and dairyman, who took things as they came. Mr. Wright was a drunkard of the chronic order. Mr. Monroe believed Jim knew enough to take care of himself, and as for the other boys, the affair promised to be a good speculation for Theodore Monroe.

Mr. Windham looked on with sorrow, from the distance which he was compelled to keep, by the fact that he was pastor of another church, and one that was considered of no importance, any how, and given to fanaticism. He preached the truth, without fear, and was quoted and laughed at. Mr. Monroe had thrown out the bait of a gift of wine for communion purposes, and it had been destroyed; and he had received in return a note, stating the reasons for this course, and containing a word of warning to the liquor-seller. This had been passed around, and made much merriment for the crowd that gathered in the bar-room of the Monroe House.

It was known that Mrs. Windham called on Mrs. Diffenbaum, and that she, with Harry, beside the poor wives of many of the drunken miners, and mill hands, attended their church: and during the winter, some temperance lecturers had been welcomed to the little unpretentious house of worship.

Mr. Windham knew the young men of Mason-

ville; and any stranger that stepped off the railroad platform and looked around the town, was pretty sure somewhere to come face to face with the earnest under shepherd, who was looking after all the lost sheep that strayed his way. He knew our boys: and was better acquainted with the dangers that threatened them, and with their habits, than those with whom they lived; and his heart yearned over them with love and pity. He longed to set in motion influences that should save them. He confided all these things to his wife and daughter of seventeen, and two sons, and thus secured the co-operation of and the safety of his own home.

Mrs. Windham was a bright, strong-brained woman, whose influence over those whom she met was of the most positive character, and always for the right and true. She had an especial influence over young people.

Almost all who came within her reach, were attracted, and held, and compelled to think of the noble and the pure things which she so faithfully represented in her own life, and in her very presence.

She was in fullest sympathy with her husband's most pronounced convictions concerning the use and sale of drinks;—and so, because of the popularity of this vice in the town, was seemingly shut away from the possibility of reaching those over whom her great motherly heart yearned with deepest interest.

The club was often a subject of conversation in this family circle, and often was this matter taken to God in prayer, about their family altar, as well as in secret.

"I met Roy Mason, to-day, on the street;" said Mrs. Windham, one evening, as they all sat together, and talked, after a meeting at their church. "And it does make my heart ache to see a fine boy like him, going to ruin. What a splendid frame he has! a noble head, and such eyes! but you can trace the work of the demon. O, something must be done to save him, and his friends."

"Roy is a sort of king among the boys of Masonville," said Clarence, the oldest son.

"Yes; I suppose that is so," replied Mrs. Windham; "and he is a noble fellow naturally, born to lead;—anybody can see that. If he could only be reached. Thomas," she said, earnestly, turning to her husband, "can't we do something?"

"I have asked the question a hundred times, my dear," replied Thomas Windham. "But the way is hedged up. You see the root of this thing is in the homes. The domestic wines, the cider, and cider-brandy, for which this region has been noted, is at the bottom of the whole trouble; and this makes the case very hard to reach. All these farmers made wine and cider, long before the railroad brought in the saloon; and all these young people were born to its use I don't know but some terrible things must happen, to open their eyes. To stop this traffic, and save the boys, you must break down the domestic and social customs of this whole region. To save Roy Mason, you must compel him to believe, agains his will, that the teaching and practice of his mother have been all wrong, and that his pastor has preached a lie, and sanctioned sin."

"Who could do that?" said Mrs. Windham. "When the voice of the home, and the church, are for the vice, who can be heard? And the beautiful thing about Roy Mason, is the proud love he has for his mother. And one of the saddest things about it is, that she is such a lovely Christian lady."

"Yes," said Mr. Windham, "she is a woman so good and noble, that her error, this sin of her ignorance, if there is such a sin, is a thing of terrible power. I fear the wine cup in the hands and home of Mrs. Mason, vastly more than in Monroe's saloon; although he is dangerous enough. Then, Faith, there are the Brayton boys:—but what can be done for them? How shall the sons of a minister, who in this day of gospel light uses wine, and preaches against prohibition, and total abstinence, and votes for the saloon, be saved? I tell you, wife, when I look about and see the work to be done here, I flinch."

"Well, dear, we are here in Christ's stead," replied Mrs. Windham; "this is his work, and we will do our part, and trust him to do his, and not fret."

"That's because your name is Faith, dear," said her husband. "You never get discouraged."

"No;" replied Mrs. Windham, "but do you know—there are the Diffenbaums; they are a puzzle to me. Harry would never be taken for a bar-tender; he doesn't look like a boy that ever drank, but of course it must be, he does. As he comes into church with his mother, I should take him for some good, steady Christian young man."

"Yes, I have thought those very things about him," replied her husband. "He has a clean noble face,

and I always like to catch his eye when I am preaching; for he is so attentive, and seems to drink in every word. It is evident, the boy is more like his mother; and if he had half a chance, would make a fine man. It is dreadful, to see the horror of great darkness that has fallen on this beautiful valley. As I look about, I think of the valley of the shadow of death. My soul is heavy; my heart is sick. I never so wanted to get the truth to any people. I wonder that Mrs. Diffenbaum, with her refined intelligence, and seeming interest in religious things, can tolerate that saloon."

"Have you talked with her about it yet?" asked his wife.

"I tried to come to the subject the other day, when I called," said Thomas Windham; "but there is something about her that will not admit of its mention."

"And you can't reach Mr. Diffenbaum yet?" asked Mrs. Windham, again.

"I never find him sober. I think he must come to the end before long."

"There seems to be but one thing for us to do, as yet," said Faith Windham. "But I believe the way will open for some soul-saving work, one of these days. When things get in a community where they are here, something has to happen. When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Lord must lift up a standard. I do wish we could get those boys, Roy Mason, and his clique, to attend the meetings."

"Yes, indeed," said her husband; "but it seems about hopeless. They all belong to Mr. Brayton's

flock ; and church, or denominational conventionalism is in the way of much effort on our part in that direction."

Roy and his friends heard of the revival meetings at Mr. Windham's church, but were not moved to go. Roy would not go "for fun," as Jimmie proposed once ; and there was not sufficient interest in the circle in which they moved, to lead them to go for anything but fun ; so the voice that might have awakened them, and saved them, rang out on the empty air, as far as they were concerned. If John Mason had been as he once was, he would have taken his wife, and Roy would then have gone, and might have been saved. But John Mason is not the man of five years, or even one year ago.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"WELL, what do you think of that Ohio business?" asked Mr. Knowlton of Mr. Monroe, a few days after Christmas. Mr Monroe laughed loudly, and replied:

"I think it's a pretty good thing on the women. They've got their hands full, if they intend to pray us out. I'd like to see them try their hands on me;" and he laughed again.

"Yes; but you're not likely to see it done, for you're not in Ohio," said Mr. Knowlton.

"No; but there are some women of that stripe in Masonville," said Mr. Monroe, "and I'm on the look out for 'em."

"Pshaw!" said Mr. Knowlton; "our women are not of that kind."

"No?" said Mr. Monroe. "Now there's that Mrs. Windham; I've always sort o' felt there was a phial of wrath against my place bottled up in her, ever since the first time I ever saw her. And Mrs. Mason might make a regular Crusader, if she once got started. And my wife;—land o' marsy!—I get it from her *every* day. It's bound to come here, Mr. Knowlton; and then you fellows just keep shady, and I'll 'tend to

them women; and call on Frank here, if I need any help. We can take care o' the whole posse of 'em, can't we, Frank?"

"I always keep out o' the way o' the women," said Frank Benton, soberly, "so you better not reckon on me."

It was the first outward rolling wave of the Crusade excitement, that had struck Masonville. The papers of the last few days had been full of the accounts of this wonderful movement; and it had become the theme of conversation in the post-office, the depot, the hotel, saloons, mines, shops, and the homes. Various were the opinions expressed; and many the criticisms made.

Mary Mason said but little. Those women were praying women, and that fact kept her from uttering a word of criticism; yet she could not quite approve of the plan. She did not like the saloon, and would be glad of any reasonable method of closing its doors forever; but she did not believe it was woman's place to go outside her home to meet the evils of the world. The world outside belonged to men,—they made it; let them attend to it. The women better pray at home, she thought; and beside it was 'casting pearls before swine,' to sing those sweet old hymns, and utter the words of prayer in such places.

Mr. Brayton said: "It's a shame: those women must be crazy. It is all contrary to the teachings of Scripture, and ought to be suppressed some way, by the law." And he left his wife and Mabel, and went to his study to prepare a sermon on the duties of women.

Mrs. Brayton thought it must be as her husband had said, and was not a little shocked when Mabel said:

"Well, I think papa is mistaken about the Bible; and I wish the crusade women would come here: I'd go with them to Monroe's; and I do think if the men don't do something about the boys, the women have got to."

Mrs. Diffenbaum and Harry had many a talk about it, and read, with eager interest, every new item.

"There must be something in this movement, my son," said Mrs. Diffenbaum, "that will help us out of our trouble, and save father yet."

"That's just what I was thinking to-day," said Harry; "I wish the women would come to father's saloon, and pray until he couldn't stand it any more; and I'd help spill the liquors. Mother," he added, impetuously, "I can't stand this much longer—something must happen soon."

"O, Harry," said his mother, "don't get discouraged: we can do nothing but wait. I have waited so long,—ever since you were born:—can't we wait a little over a year longer? As soon as you are of age, you can dictate terms to your father; for although he will not listen to you now, he will then, rather than have you leave him. I must stay with him, and I cannot without you."

"I shall not leave you, mother;—when I go, you must go too;" replied the boy. "And I do hope something for us will come out of this crusade. I think father has found out that I do not intend to sell

the drink, and I don't believe I shall ever have to do that. It seems to me, I should leave anyhow, if it came to that."

Mrs. Wright, whose whole life had been cursed by drink, and who had never thought of such a thing as deliverance, heard and read of the crusade with a vague, wondering gladness. At last, somebody had dared speak out of the home and heart of woman. The crusade women had uttered the cry of her own soul, and there came with this fact, a quickening of her own life and thought. She could wait now, years and years if need be, and be cheerful; for her long-felt, but unuttered need, had found expression.

"This is the voice of God," said Mr. Windham, to his wife. "Woman, thy name is Faith. This is the answer to the long prayer and cry of the victims of rum, and is an assurance of victory, by-and-bye: a token of the coming kingdom: it is the beginning of the end of rum. I hope the wave will strike Masonville in all its force. I hope the Lord has a Deborah here." And he went into his study, to prepare a sermon from the text: "Awake, awake, Deborah; awake, awake; utter a song! Arise Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam."

Mrs. Windham had but little to say: but she hid all these things in her heart, where the Holy Spirit had already entered, with a message from the King, which she must hear, and to which she must make an answer After her husband had spoken, and gone to his study, she arose, and went into the room, where a rosy-cheeked boy of three years was sleeping; and

kneeling beside his crib, she remained in silent inquiry before the Lord.

She was personally interested in this movement, for the sake of her own children. Her sons, the two just coming toward manhood, and the beautiful boy in his crib, and her lovely Anna, were in a world where rum reigned. Could she ever see Anna come into the presence of one of the young men of Masonville?—even in the most conventional social way? Yet how was it to be avoided, unless she led the life of a recluse?

She was an attractive girl, in their midst; and her mother felt that every time she was with these young people for an hour, it was at the infinite risk of her own future. Mrs. Windham had taken alarm from the first, and now, as she knelt, she prayed: "Lord, save me from mean selfishness: but help me to purify the atmosphere about my own home and children. O, help us women to make this world a safe place for those whom thou hast given us. O save us from that power out there, that is able to take all the best work we can do for them out of the lives of our children. That fire of the demon can consume all the gold, and leave but the dross. My noble Clarence, my bright Eugene, my pet baby, could be made like any of these poor wretches, if drink should get hold of them. My beautiful Anna would wither, and become like any other drunkard's wife, if she should be so unfortunate as to fall into such a pit. Sometimes I want to take these children in my arms, and fly to some place where there is no work of the devil. O Lord, we are here in thy name, and for thy work: do not

allow our children to be touched by this thing. Let not its breath blow across their lives, anywhere. I give my home to thee, as never before. I will do thy work, whatsoever it may be, and trust thee to do thy work for us."

In the Ship's Company the crusade was the subject of discussion, together with the sentiments uttered by Mr. Brayton, in his sermon of the day before.

"I tell you what 'tis, boys," said Captain Jim, "I'd make a row if my mother went into any such business. I'd make it lovely for any of 'em, if they should start such a thing here."

"Well," said Roy, "I think they must be a strange lot of women. But the fact that they are women, ought to make everybody keep their hands off. I don't believe in interfering with the women."

"Well, I do; when they go to interfering with you," said Captain Jim. "Let them keep at home, in their own place, and they're all right; but when they get out into the street, and go to making a noise;—singing, and praying around,—then I'd like to be the one to show them the way back home, and see to it that they were glad to get there."

"Well," said Roy, "I for one, wouldn't stand by and see anything done to the women."

"Then may be we'd get into a fight, you and I," laughed Jim.

"It's possible:" replied Roy, "for I should defend the praying women from anybody, if they came here. Of course I shouldn't like to see my mother marching in the street and singing and praying in the saloons, but if she did do it, nobody should interfere with her."

"No danger of any of our mothers doing such a thing," said Willis Knowlton; "they're too sensible. Now my mother and father never interfere with each other's business. Mother used to attend to me till I got too old, and now she leaves me to father, and father leaves me to myself. Mother watches me, I know, though; and that night when I went home tipsy she felt awful bad, and I told her I'd never do such a thing again."

"I think you're in a fair way to keep your promise," laughed Archer. "You've filled your glass three times already."

"Is that anything to you?" replied Willie, angrily.

"Not much;" retorted Archer, "only I had such a time getting you home before, I'd like to have you keep your legs."

"I'd like to know who had a time with you?" suggested Willie. "You're mighty independent, now Fred is here to see you home."

"I don't think you can afford to quarrel, boys," said Frederick; "from what I hear, I guess you've all needed to be helped."

"All but Roy," said Dillie. "He always goes straight; no matter how much he drinks. He could drink us all drunk, and then take us all home."

"Did you ever notice how Roy goes, though, when he's a little full?" asked Egbert Marsden, with a laugh.

"I have," said Jimmie; "and laughed lots o' times."

"He leans forward, so, with both hands in his pockets," said Egbert, arising and putting himself in

position; "and such walking! he just more than goes great long strides—makes one think of an ostrich."

"Well, who cares?" said Roy, as the boys laughed in a noisy chorus. "I presume I have a right to make you think of an ostrich if I want to. But what's the business to-night?" and Roy filled his glass and shuffled a pack of cards.

"Let's have a game for treats," said Willie.

"Yes," said Frederick, "play for a bottle of wine, the winner to treat the crowd; that's the way we do in our college club."

"Oh, say, boys," said Dillie, "tell us some of your college doings."

"That's so!" said Roy; "that 'll be better than a game: the cards we always have, and Fred and Claude only semi-occasionally."

"Agreed:" cried the boys.

"You must have had some jolly scrapes," said Jimmie.

So the game was postponed, and Fred and Claude regaled the company with stories of college dissipation, wine and oyster suppers; and sang some college songs, which Claude explained were not down in the books, and only sung by the fellows in their club-room. Some songs they sang and stories they told made Roy settle down in his seat, and draw his shoulders up to his ears, while his face flushed, and a look like that of a shaded light, came into his eyes. At last he said:

"I don't like such things, Fred."

"Oh, hush! Roy," said Egbert Marsden; "go on,

Fred." And Fred went on, while the demoralizing interest deepened, and the wine was drank more and more freely, and the laugh went round, and even Roy's ears became used to uncleanness worse than profanity; and before the recital was over he had even joined in the laugh, and had forgotten, under the spell of the wine, the sense of shame and insult to his manhood which it would be long before he would ever feel again.

"When do you ever study any, boys?" asked Dillie, in wonder, at last.

"Oh, you'll find out how that's done when you go to college;" replied Claude, with a laugh.

"Frederick," said Archer, who had looked a little grave in spite of his reckless spirit, "what would father and mother say?"

"Father and mother? Ah! let's change the subject," said Frederick.

"Don't think any boy's mother better be mentioned here," muttered Roy, although his tongue was too thick to admit of many words.

CHAPTER XIX.

THAT night it was a very late hour when the club broke up They would probably have staid until morning, had not Frank Benton, the bar-tender, come to tell them that they must leave, as he had orders from the hotel clerk to close up their room.

Jimmie was inclined to be saucy, but the other boys, in spite of the fact that they were pretty well intoxicated, were disposed to go; so they dispersed without any trouble, beyond some loud words between Jimmie and Frank, who in a sober but positive manner tried to get him to go to his room quietly.

Roy staggered home, falling two or three times; but the exercise, and the cold air of the winter night cleared his brain a little. He came into the door of his home as he had never come before; and his mother was waiting for him, wearily, fainting almost, for her strength was failing these days. She met him at the door.

"Oh, Roy," she cried, "how late you are, dear: and what is the matter with you? Are you sick?"

"No:" he said, roughly, "I'm drunk; I'll be all right 'n the mornin'."

"Roy!" gasped Mary Mason; "you don't mean you are drunk?"

"'es, all o' that, I guess. Better get to bed, needn't bother 'bout comin' up t' night."

His mother caught hold of his arm, as it seemed to her he would fall as he started forward, and essayed to help him up the stairs.

"There now!" he said, as he stopped and looked down at her with vacancy in his eyes, "leave me alone; le' go o' me; guess I can walk yet. D'ye hear! ye needn't come up t' night."

Mary Mason's hand dropped from her boy's arm, and she stood listless, holding the lamp as he stumbled up the stairway into his room, and shut the door with a bang.

Her face was white as death: and she trembled in every nerve. She waited, and listened, but all was still; and after a moment she went back into the sitting-room, and then stood, lamp in hand, listening. Some moments passed in a strange tumult of indecision. But at length a fixed look of determination came to her face, and compressed her lips; and turning, she rapidly ascended the stairs. She paused, however, at Roy's door, and stood a moment, for the first time in her life, fearing to enter; not knowing how she would be received. Her heart sank with faintness, but the very sickness of soul that was upon her, compelled her to go on. She opened the door; and there, across his clean white bed, which had been his mother's especial care for him all his life, lay her boy, in his hat and boots, sleeping the heavy sleep of the drunkard.

Roy had thrown himself on the outside of the bed, just as he was. The night was very cold, and the air of the room icy. Mary Mason was surprised at herself, that she could quietly set the lamp in its usual place on the little table, beside Roy's Bible, and go to work to make him comfortable. All sense of pain or surprise seemed to have left her utterly. It did not seem that the object before her was anything in which she had especial interest; only it was a human being who must be kept from freezing. She took hold of his boots, and drawing with all her strength, succeeded in removing them. Roy was so stupid that he only muttered a few times during the process. Then she got on to the bed, and pulling at his great heavy body and limbs, succeeded in getting him on to the bed in some shape. Then with much labor she tried to roll him into something like a comfortable position. He was at length aroused sufficiently to turn himself, which he did with an angry grunt, and was in shape to be covered. Mrs. Mason brought comforters from a closet, and tucked him in warmly. This done, she stood a moment and looked at him; and suddenly it came home to her, that this beastly clod was her Roy, her own splendid noble Roy; and that he had come home drunk, and had spoken harshly to her, and that for the first time in his life he had gone to sleep in his own room without a word of good-night, the kiss, or prayer. She could hardly believe she was awake: it was too dreadful to be true. After a moment she knelt, mechanically, and with her hand on Roy's head, tried to pray. Her prayer seemed dead: cold as a stone

it lay in her heart, and found colder expression Then suddenly, with a sense of comfort, came the remembrance of what she had been reading that day of the praying women, and she thought, for the first time, "If I were there, I should be with them, I'm sure."

Mary Mason went down to her own room, with a sense of loneliness, such as she had never known before; a cold, dull sense of loss. She grew faint, and reeled; and grasping the sideboard, near which she stood, she supported herself. Pouring out a glass of wine, she drank it; and drawing her shawl about her, sank upon the lounge. She could not think of going to bed; she could not sleep, with that thing in the room above her.

When morning came, which was not long, she arose wearily, and climbed up into Roy's room, to see if it was really true, or if she had slept and dreamed.

He was still lying as she had left him; with a dark congested look in his bloated face; with blubbering lips, breathing heavily, while a strong sickening odor filled the room. She opened a window a little way, and then went down. John Mason came out of their room, and as she looked up at him, she saw some thing in his face that made her shudder; for during the long night-watch, she had lived over much of the past; and she had been seeing her husband as he was, when she first knew him in his noble prime; and as he appeared before her that morning, he was a surprise to her, with his puffy cheeks, and heavy red eyes.

"Didn't you come to bed last night, Mary?" he asked.

"No: I waited for Roy," she replied.

"What time did he come in?"

"About four o'clock."

"The young rascal!" exclaimed John Mason, "this thing's got to stop."

"I wish it could be stopped," replied his wife, wearily; "but be careful what you say, and do, John. I can't stand another scene like that one."

Her husband did not reply to this, but after a moment he asked:

"Why didn't you come to bed after he got in?"

"Oh, John, I couldn't," she cried; "go up-stairs and look at him: you may just as well know."

"Why—what is it?" asked he, turning pale. "He aint hurt?"

"Hurt?" she replied, "yes, mortally; go and see."

He stepped quickly toward the stairway, while she sat on the lounge, and covered her face with her hand.

John Mason was gone several minutes, and then came slowly down the stairs, into the room. His wife did not look up: he walked back and forth several times; then he came and sat down beside her.

"Mary," he said, in a husky tone.

"Yes, John;" she replied, without lifting her head.

"Do you know what just came into my mind, as I looked at Roy?"

"No: what?"

"Something you said that night that I found Dolly dead in the pasture;—you said 'twould have been worse to have found the young colt,—you meant the boy,—cast,—or something to that effect; and now

that's just what has happened. Mary, something 's got to be done. I didn't know the boy was coming to this."

"John," said Mary Mason, lifting her head, and looking at him; "don't you know? can't you see what we're all coming to? How many nights have you spent until nearly midnight, at Monroe's, and come home—well—not yourself at all? And how long is it since we have had family worship?—not for weeks. Neither you, nor Roy, would be here; and I have sat and waited, with a heart too heavy to pray. Now John, dear;" and she laid her hand on his knee, "you've been too godly a man, to go on like that. I never would have believed that such a state of things could have been in our home."

"Nor I, Mary," said John Mason; "but it's all because of this cursed railroad."

"No, John, don't lay the blame on the railroad;—that has been a blessing to hundreds, and might be to us. It need curse no one. It has all come from forgetting God, and getting in with a man like Monroe. It has been the work of *sin*, not the railroad."

"Guess you're about right again," replied her husband. "I've known, every time I've stopped to think, that anything that would take me out this way at night, and break down the family altar, was wrong. But somehow I've slipped along with it, until I'm farther than I had any idea. And now, Mary, I'm ready to promise that I'll never go there again, unless business takes me. But what about Roy? What shall be done with him, after this?"

"First, John, let us pray; let us begin again this

morning to have prayers, and never, never again neglect it, as long as we live. It will seem dreadful, to read and pray with him lying up there that way, but it would be more dreadful not to do it."

So John Mason took up the Bible, and after turning the leaves a moment, with broken utterance, read the fifty-first Psalm—David's confession and prayer; then the two bowed together, and plead with God for pardon and restoration; and Mary Mason plead for her boy. "Oh, Lord," she cried, "I have failed, miserably failed; take him into thine own hand; anything but sin, Lord! anything but sin!—do something,—but save him, and us."

They arose, both feeling that it had been good to call upon God; and Mary Mason went about preparation for breakfast, saying:

"I suppose we had better let Roy alone; let him sleep this off."

"Yes; that will be best," replied her husband, and went out, to see about some early chores.

CHAPTER XX.

WHEN Roy awakened, that day, it was nearly night. He had been living so fast for months, that the demands of wearied nature, as well as the effect of drink, held him fast in a slumber so profound that he had scarcely moved. His mother had been up to his room several times, and had thought to awaken him; but still concluded to let him sleep on, until he awakened of himself. Her heart was full of things tender, loving, and true, that she was going to say to him; but she could wait.

With his first consciousness came a sense of weariness and desolation, such as he had never known before. He lay a while, trying to think where he was, and what had happened. He found himself dressed, and yet wrapped in blankets; and his first thought then was, that he was on board the Gazelle. Then opening his eyes, he saw the familiar objects of his own room. How did it happen, that he was in this condition? He raised himself up, and rubbed his eyes, and looked about, and gradually the truth dawned.

"Dreadful!" he exclaimed; "I came home drunk,

and mother has tried to get me to bed." He heard the clock strike; and looking up, he saw from the light on the wall, that the sun was low in the west.

"Five o'clock in the afternoon! I declare;--this is a fix! I've slept all day. What have father and mother been doing about it? Mother, mother, this is dreadful! I can't see my mother;—I am ashamed to go down."

And Roy sat on the side of his bed, and rubbed his hands, in a listless, idle way. Then looking at his feet, he saw that his boots were off.

"She pulled off my boots;—my poor, dear mother!" and tears came to his eyes. "What a beast I am!"

He discovered that he had a dull heavy pain in his head, and as the blood began to flow in his veins there came a sharp, imperious demand for drink.

"I'm awful thirsty," he sighed, grinding his teeth, and biting his tongue. "If I just had a drink of mother's wine, I'd give a dollar; but I can't go down and meet her. I'll get out of the window, into the tree, and drop to the ground, and go down to Monroe's and get a drink, and some breakfast:—no, supper. No: I won't go to Monroe's, for I may meet father. I'll go to Diffenbaum's;—wonder if Harry would sell me a drink?"

Roy got off the bed softly, and drawing on his boots, he stepped on tip-toe to the window, which his mother had partly raised, and lifting it carefully, he let himself out into a great maple-tree, that stood near the house; a feat which had been a favorite pastime from his earliest boyhood. He succeeded in getting

down, and away from the house, without being observed, and made his way rapidly to Diffenbaum's. He found only Mr. Diffenbaum in the saloon.

"Where's Harry?" asked Roy.

"Gone up to his supper:—anything I can do for you?—we don't see you very often."

"No: I've never been here before. Yes: give me a good glass of toddy, hot, with some crackers. And Roy threw down a quarter.

"This shall be my treat," said Mr. Diffenbaum. "I'm glad to see you in our place; take a seat; Harry'll be in soon."

Roy took a seat at the table, in the little back room, and Mr. Diffenbaum brought him a steaming glass of toddy, strong with whiskey, with a plate of crackers, cheese, and dried herring; and then went out to serve a man at the bar, saying to himself:

"My! how he goes:—looks like an old soak:—hasn't even washed or combed:—I never did worse than that."

Roy drank the toddy as rapidly as its heat would allow, and tasted the crackers; and then called for brandy, for which Mr. Diffenbaum took a dime. As he was drinking this, Harry came in, and his father went out, telling him there was some one to see him in the back room.

Harry's eyes lighted for a moment, as he saw Roy, and he sprang toward him: then he stopped. He saw that, that made him change color; and he stood regarding his friend in silence.

"Well, Harry, you've changed your mind, it seems,' said Roy: "I thought you'd be glad to see me."

"I am always glad to see you, Roy," said Harry, "but not here. I can't bear to have you come here for drink,—and brandy, too."

"You're a pretty bar-tender," said Roy, angrily. "Do you tell all your customers that?—why shouldn't I have it?—I paid for it."

"Oh, Roy, it isn't that,—but"—

"But what, I'd like to know? I've as good a right to come here for drink, as to go anywhere else;—and now, you may give me another glass,—brandy, too."

"Oh, Roy!" said Harry, "I can't sell you drink."

"Can't?" exclaimed Roy; "say you won't, and done with it."

"Well then, I will not;" replied Harry, with emphasis.

Roy had already taken more strong drink than he had ever used before at one time; and after his long abstinence, and the dissipation of the night before, it took a strong hold on him; and he was mad with the mania of drink, and ready for anything desperate.

"Won't? eh!" he exclaimed. "Yes you will! Get me a glass of brandy!—here's your dime, if that's what you 're waiting for."

Harry was standing at the end of the bar.

"I don't want your money, Roy," he said, "and I can't sell you the brandy. I will not—you are my friend, and"—

He did not finish the sentence, for Roy struck him a savage blow with his clenched fist, which drew blood. Harry staggered and caught at the corner of the bar, but his hand slipped its hold, and he fell to the floor. Two men had just entered, and one of

them sprang at Roy and held him, as he was about to follow up his advantage over his victim, and the other gave the alarm.

In a moment the saloon was full; the police came, and Roy was taken into custody; hearing, as he was led out of the room to the calaboose, "He's killed him, I guess."

The brandy Roy had taken, together with the excitement of his rage, had its sway with him; and during the first part of the night he raved like a madman, as he was; much to the amusement of some fellows who stood outside and listened. After a while he began to realize the situation, and became very quiet, and agony and remorse were his companions.

"What have I done? killed Harry? Somebody said so. Mother, mother! it will kill her. Mabel! my sweet Mabel! I can never endure this!" Then suddenly he remembered Willie Briggs, and he cried:

"O Willie! Willie Briggs! And I was so proud and scorned you! I need not look for pity from anybody. I've killed Harry, and that will kill my mother. I shall be tried, condemned, and hung. No, I must escape. I wouldn't care so much for myself: but I must run for the sake of mother and Mabel. This is an old shell of a thing. I can get out, well enough."

The purpose to escape took complete possession of him, and drove out every other thought for the remainder of the night.

"I must wait," he said, "until all is still, and then I can cut this door down with my knife."

The calaboose was, as Roy said, "an old shell." A strong place had never been needed as yet, and this was used by the police simply for disposing of drunken men, who were found on the street late, until they could be brought before the justice and fined for the benefit of the city treasury. Roy examined the place, and made sure of what he could do, and then sat down to wait, and lay out a plan for the future. "I can never see my father, and mother, and Mabel, or anybody here again. It's all over with me: I shall be worse than Briggs, after all. I'll get out, and start off somewhere, where no one ever heard of me. I've got to strike out for life to-night. I have no choice. I'll go West. And then there came to him a remembrance of his golden dreams of the wonderful West, and his mother's words about the 'seven league boots," and of Mr. Lawton.

"I shall need seven league boots," he muttered. "Oh! I can't ever see Mr. Lawton." Then his mind ran off over the past of his life, and he recalled a thousand little sayings of his mother in their talks, and he sobbed:

"Oh, she will never again come to my room and pray with me; she will never kiss me again. Oh, mother! Why did all this happen? I wanted to be good. If I had only told her about the club. If there had never been any club: if we'd never gone on that excursion: if I'd never made the engine: if there'd never come any rail-road. Oh, if I'd never been born!" And he buried his face in his hands and sobbed aloud.

When all was still outside, Roy began his work of

getting out of his prison. This he easily effected, by cutting the door about the hinges with the great jack-knife which he always carried, and splitting off the wood; and long before morning he stepped out stealthily; not at all in bearing like the proud brave Roy whom we have known; not at all the Roy he would have been, but for his mother's wine.

He did not stop to look about, but under cover of the darkness he crept away around the building, and through alleys, until he was out of the village; and then he started to walk the railroad, to a junction where he could catch a train, he hoped, before he would be missed. Then suddenly it occurred to him that it took money to ride on the cars, and he had but little in his pocket. No: he must walk. He would walk as far as he could before morning, and hide during the day.

"I'll tramp nights, and sleep days," he said, "until I am so far away that there will be no danger of discovery; then I'll find some work and get money to take me away on to Pike's Peak, or somewhere."

And so that is the way Roy went West.

CHAPTER XXI.

MARY MASON took great pains with her supper that night, for the sake of the sleeper up-stairs, intending that nothing should be lacking in his home, and wishing to prepare the way for the good talk she purposed having with him that evening; for she should keep him with her at home.

When supper was ready, and John Mason came in, they sat and talked a few moments, hoping Roy would come down; but at last she said: "I must waken him." And she went up-stairs. John heard her open the door of Roy's room, and after a moment step quickly across to the window, then out into the hall, and call in a quick, excited tone:

"Roy! Roy!" as she went first into one chamber and another. Then she called "John!" in a faint voice. He sprang to the stairway: she was sitting on the top stair, reaching out her hands helplessly to him.

"John! help! help!" she cried.

"Why, what is it?" he said, hastening to her and taking her hands.

"He's gone:" she said, with a dry sob.

"Gone? What do you mean?"

"Roy's gone: his window is open: you can see where he dropped down on the snow from the tree."

"Oh, well, Mary," said John Mason, smiling, "if that's all, he'll come back again. There pet, don't fret; he'll come back."

"Perhaps he will," she said, languidly, rising with the help of her husband's hands; "but I was so frightened. I thought he was so ashamed he had run away. He is very proud, you know, father; our Roy is."

"Yes, I know: but Roy wouldn't go off like that. And besides, where would he go?"

"Sure enough; I guess you're right," she said. But oh, John, this has been such a terrible day—so many terrible days and nights, I'm all unstrung: I feel really sick; let me lie down on the lounge."

John Mason tenderly supported her down the stairs, and brought a pillow and shawl, and tucked her up cosily on the couch, and then seated himself beside her, and chafed her cold hands. The supper went untasted. The slow minutes lengthened to hours, and Roy did not come. Once John went out, and looked up at the window and examined around the tree, and traced the tracks on the snow out to the street, and stood looking down to the village, in the moonlight, at the railroad, and the little steamer lying frozen in at its dock. And a great mournful shadow passed over his soul, and he turned back and sat down beside his wife. He had never before seen her so prostrate, and he was alarmed.

"There's the half-past nine train," said Mary

Mason, as a shrill whistle rang out through the valley.

"Yes;" replied her husband; "strange the boy don't come home. He must be along soon."

"Well, dear," said his wife, "we'll have prayers together, and then when he does come we 'll pray again. It seems as if my heart will break if you don't pray."

John Mason took up the Bible and turned again to the ninety-first Psalm; and as he read, a strange wonder grew up in Mary's heart; and when he had finished, she said:

"What is the reason that with such a promise as that, such a plague has come into our dwelling? God is true; if there is any failure it is not in God, it must be in us. Something is very much wrong: and it must be in us altogether. Let us ask him to show us what it is. Oh, let us get nearer to God:

> 'Nearer, my God, to thee,
> E'en though it be a cross
> That raiseth me.'

I can't sing; but pray, John."

And John Mason knelt beside the couch and prayed, as he had not done for many months, if for years. Fervently he prayed for his son, that he might be delivered from the snare, and saved; and then for his wife and for himself he craved the much needed light and comfort of God.

"Now, Mary," he said, as he arose from his knees, "you must go to bed; you cannot wait up this way. You look like a ghost; go to bed, and I will sit up and keep the house warm."

"I can't do that, John," she said; "this night, of all others, I must see him when he comes. But oh, John, if he shouldn't come! My heart tells me he will not! Oh, Roy, Roy, my darling, where are you?"

"Why, Mary dear," said her husband, "he's at Monroe's with the boys, of course; he's a young rascal to do it to-night, and he may come home drunk again; but you need not fear anything worse than that; and then when he does come we will see that this thing 's stopped. I'd go after him; but I'm afraid if he is drinking he would defy me, as he did, and make things worse."

There was awful comfort for Mary Mason in the words, "You need not fear anything worse than that." "Could anything be worse?" she thought; and she lay with closed eyes, silent, while John held her cold hands. Thus the night passed: its slow hours treading painfully over that mother's heart, as she waited for the feet that did not come. John Mason exhausted his resources of consolation: he tried to talk a little now and then, but there was so little to say, that he would drop into silence again, communing with the Holy Spirit that stood before his consciousness, holding sternest truth to that father's soul. Then he would utter a few words of prayer; then chafe Mary's cold hands. Once he opened the Bible and read, and at last, as the sad morning began to dawn, and he saw, by daylight, how the anxiety of that night had worn into his wife's cheeks and brow, and what wells of sorrow her beautiful eyes had become, he threw himself on the floor and wept. It was bitter weeping, that made

the morning air shudder and sicken, as the old man lay with his gray head on the rug, covered with remorse, bemoaning his own sin, and his share in the ruin of his son, and the blighting of his home.

This aroused Mary Mason; and she arose, and seating herself on the floor, lifted the prostrate head to her arms, and so held and comforted her husband; and in so doing was herself lifted up, and helped, and made strong to meet the trial which yet awaited her.

"Now John, dear," she said, after he had grown quiet, "we must leave Roy, and ourselves, in God's hands. It seems almost strange, that I can speak his name so calmly after such a night; but we must trust in God, while we do the best we can, to learn and do his will. I will get a quick breakfast, for you must have something; and if Roy doesn't come by that time, you must go down to Monroe's and see about it. I hoped he and we would be spared this humiliation, but you may have to go and bring him home."

Mary Mason staggered, in spite of her brave heart, as she went about the room; and John was obliged to help her get the simple breakfast on the table. Breakfast was a form that morning; and seeing that John only tasted his coffee, Mary arose and brought from the sideboard the old-fashioned decanter, and was about to pour him a glass of wine.

"Mary!" exclaimed her husband, in a startled tone, and a look of surprise.

"Why, John! what is it?" she asked.

"I didn't think it possible,—after all that has happened."

"Why—my home-made wine!" began his wife

"It all goes together, Mary," interrupted John Mason. "A glass of this, calls for two of Monroe's. It's a fact, Mary,—it's been my experience."

"John!" gasped his wife, "and you never told me!"

"No;—there is my greatest sin. I have known it was doing us harm; but I liked it too well to speak the word, that I knew would banish it forever. I knew also, that it was ruining the town, but *I liked* it. I craved it, and so I voted for it on the town-board. I have often wondered if you really did not know. To-night, I have seen things in God's light. I am responsible for Roy's career; because I did not speak when I saw the relation between your side-board, and Monroe's bar. I fear, if Roy is lost utterly, it is my own work. Mary,—O God! how can I bear it?—forgive me!—forgive me, and save my boy!"

"John!" gasped his wife again, still holding the decanter.

"It's so, Mary; it's hard on us, but it's true. You said once, you believed God would give us as good a man out of our boy, as he could with the material we had furnished."

"O John!—Oh, my heavenly Father, have mercy! have I done this thing?—Roy, Roy, forgive me!—Come home!—Oh, my boy." And dropping the decanter, she clasped her hands to her head.

"Mary, my wife," said John, going to her, and folding his arms about her. "Let us thank God, that it is no worse than it is."

"How could it be worse, John?" she asked, in despair, allowing him to lead her to the lounge.

"Suppose, Mary," he said, "this had gone on another year or two. Mary, we've had a great deliverance; greater than you know. I've seen it to-night, as I have sat beside you, and thought how designing men have been plotting my ruin. I have been a weak and foolish old man, and they have come near breaking us up utterly. I'll not tell you all about it now, but bad as this all is, it might have been worse. God has wrought one deliverance, and we can trust him for the other. If he has saved me, who was so guilty, can he not save our boy? He has shown us our great mistake, and sin; and for him to show us this, is to save us from it, if we will let him. But Mary, I should not feel safe for myself if a drop of this wine is left in the house; and Roy must come into a clean house, when he comes home."

"It shall not stay!" cried Mary Mason, rising. "We will pour it all out, and never make any again, as long as we live." And she led the way to the cellar, where was stored the wine, new, and old, for which she had been noted. She began unpacking from the bin of sawdust.

"Here's this communion wine, John; what of that?" she asked.

"Let it go with the rest. I know, in myself, that it is not safe to keep it. Mary, Mr. Windham has been teaching the truth about all this, yet we have laughed at him."

"I have not, John."

"No, Mary, you never do that," said her husband. "You always respect any man's convictions; but all Masonville, nearly, has laughed and criticised. I

laughed with them at Monroe's, but I knew he was right."

"Oh, John!"

"Yes, it is dreadful, Mary; you didn't think I could have fallen so low."

"If I had thought such a thing," she began, and then changed the sentence, rather than say a sharp thing to her husband. "I have thought Mr. Windham was an extremest in many things, but believed him sincere. But John, I can't now, after what you have said, see the reason why this simple home-made wine is chargeable with such results. But of course I don't want it in the house, if it is a snare to any soul, especially to you and Roy."

"And to you, Mary," said her husband, averting his face.

"To me, John?"

"Yes, to you:—of course you never take much, but you were beginning to use it more often; and that fact was troubling me."

"Is that so, John?" she asked; then added, thoughtfully, "yes, you are right; but I had not thought of it. Merciful God!" she exclaimed, and for the first time in all these hours of anguish, she wept; the tears running down her face. At length she said:

"Thank God, that it is no worse than it is!—Oh, I wish Roy would come! I must tell him about all this; and we must all promise together, to let it alone forever."

She was industriously breaking bottles over a tub.

"John," she said, "do you suppose there is alcohol in this wine?"

"Of course there is, Mary. You know it too, if you'll stop to think. Alcohol comes by fermentation; and you know the process of wine-making well enough, to know that is not real wine until it has fermented. And there is the same spirit in this, that is in the strong drinks. We have never thought, or read, or talked about these things as we ought to have done."

"That is true," replied Mary Mason. "If I should repeat those things which I have conscientiously done, I see that I should sin; and it will be sin to remain in ignorance concerning this matter. There must be books that will inform us; let us inquire of Mr. Windham. And now, John, we'll put all these bottles in these tubs, and when Roy comes, get him to help you take them off. You can't do it alone; and now I think you had better go after him."

"But Mary," replied her husband, earnestly, "I don't want him about this wine. I especially do want him to come into a clean house; I will take a basket, and carry them all out to the spring,—break the bottles, and let the wine flow down into the river. Then I'll go for Roy. Then I can go with some heart and courage. It is early yet;—he is probably spending the night with Jimmie, at the hotel; and they will not be up yet. You go up and lie down. I will soon have done."

So the house was cleaned, and the waters carried away the sin, and it was buried in the sea;—but it was twenty years too late!

CHAPTER XXII.

JOHN MASON came in from the work of breaking the wine-bottles, and kissed his wife, as she lay on the lounge, weak and pale; and then hastened out to inquire after Roy, at the Monroe House.

As he passed along the street, he noticed something unusual in the faces of the people whom he met. Everybody looked at him sharply; some would turn and look, after they had passed; but no one greeted him in the usual hearty way. He could not account for it, and it troubled him. Thinking of this, and wondering, he came to the corner near which stood the calaboose. He saw a crowd of men and boys, standing in front of it, talking loudly, and examining the place.

As he approached, a small boy threw out his arm with a frantic gesture toward him, and cried:

"Here's his father!—he'll know."

John Mason stopped; he knew he was the person spoken of; and he was '*his* father.' What did it mean? The crowd gathered about him. A policeman and a constable came together, and the latter

said,—speaking kindly, for there was something in the old man's face, that touched him:

"Mr. Mason, do you know where your son is, this morning? We were about going up to your place to search for him."

"Search?" said John Mason, in a husky tone. "For my son,—what do you mean?"

"Then haven't you heard?—haven't you been informed?" asked the constable.

"Heard what?—what is it?" he gasped, clutching for support at a hitching-post.

"Why, Roy Mason got drunk, and struck Harry Diffenbaum an awful whack:—'bout killed him, and broke out o' the lock-up, and ran off," shouted the small boy, before he could be silenced. The policeman took hold of him, and shook him; and the crowd laughed, regardless of the iron that had entered John Mason's soul.

Mr. Windham had heard of the affair, and was out on the street; and seeing the crowd, came to the place, ariving just in time to hear John Mason's startled question, and the cruel answer. He sprang to his side, and caught him in his arms, as he was reeling to a fall.

"Take him home, Mr. Windham," said the constable.

"Get a carriage, somebody!" cried Mr. Windham; and a dozen men and boys started on the run for a stable. But a passing sleigh was pressed into the service, and John Mason was lifted into it, and taken in an insensible condition, into the presence of his wife.

The physician said it was apoplexy, and doubted if he would rally, but the people all said, "it is the trouble."

Mr. Windham could never refer to that time without emotion. He and Mr. Brayton came and went during the days that followed, in the spirit of fellowship, carrying the consolations of the Gospel to the stricken house. Harry Diffenbaum came, with his head bound, and his arm in a sling; while Mrs. Diffenbaum and Mrs. Windham divided the time between them. Mabel was in constant attendance upon Mrs. Mason; while Mrs. Brayton took all the responsibility of caring for the affairs of the house; and the eyes of all Masonville were turned toward the farmhouse, whose windows were always shaded during the day, and whose lights went out no more by night.

The shock that had come to John Mason that morning was more than he could endure. He was advanced in years; and his whole physical nature was under the influence of the irregular life he had been living of late; and then, this sorrow was more terrible than death to him, as well as his wife.

If Roy, in the pride and strength of his pure young manhood, had been brought in cold in death, they could have borne it. But this, with the knowledge of their own share in the terrible work, they could not bear.

After a few days, John Mason seemed to rally, and could speak. He asked for his wife, and she was assisted to his room, and was left alone with her husband.

"Mary," he said, "I am glad we emptied the wine

it made the spring brook red as blood, but it has all been carried away; it's all in the sea, by this time. I'd like to clean out the town now, but I must leave that to you. The praying women have got hold of the right end. When I'm gone, somebody will find Roy, and save him, and he'll come back to you some time. Don't be foolish about the farm, as I've been. Let the boy cut it up and down, anything to keep him busy. Tell him that 'wine is a mocker;'—but he'll find that out for himself. I'd like to see him once more; but I shall have to wait till you bring him up yonder. I'm so glad, Mary, of the one thing. 'The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth from all sin.' 'He is able to save,' and 'destroy,' and he's going to destroy this curse of drink, and save our boy."

Mary Mason had laid her face down upon the pillow beside her husband's, and her arm was thrown over his breast. He made an effort to move, to look at her, but could not, so he said:

"Lift up your head, Mary, where I can see your face; I want to see you, dear."

So she lifted her head, and he gazed long and earnestly into her face; and his eyes filled with tears that ran down on the pillow.

"Poor Mary," he sighed, "God comfort her! I wouldn't go and leave you to bear it all alone, darling, if I could stay, but I know I must die. It would seem like a mean thing to do, if I could help it; but my days are at an end; I must go. I'm glad I could say these things first. It isn't so bad as it might have been, after all."

"O God, help me!" sobbed Mary Mason, a dry tearless sob.

"God will help you; he will not 'leave you comfortless, he will come to you;' he will give you strength; he will 'cover you with his feathers;' 'call upon him, and he will answer;' he will 'be with you in trouble.' He will deliver you. He will 'show you his salvation.' He will yet make you glad. 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.' 'I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge, my' "—

His utterance was impeded; he made an effort to proceed, but his tongue refused to do its work, and a silence that would never be broken, sealed his lips. His eyes continued gazing into her face, full of expression, but he could not move; he had been stricken with paralysis. A cry from Mary Mason brought Mr. and Mrs. Windham, and Mabel, and Mrs. Brayton to the room.

"He has had another shock," said Mr. Windham as he felt his hands, and examined his eyes and pulse. "I will run for the doctor."

Mrs. Brayton took Mary Mason in her arms, as she sat beside her, and with her cheek pressed closely to hers, held her. In a few moments the doctor came, with Mr. Windham, and they all stood around the bed, while the doctor made his examination. His face grew grave and sorrowful as he proceeded. At length, he turned to Mr. Windham, and said:

"It is the end."

"Is there no hope?"

"None: he is going out fast: he will never move again."

The doctor stood with his hand on the arm of the dying man, counting the fitful pulsations of the broken heart. Mrs. Brayton supported the almost lifeless form of her friend, while the others stood in meek and sorrowful sympathy about her.

Mary Mason was bewildered, amazed, like one in a dream. Every thing about her seemed terribly unreal, like a phantom of the brain, from which she could not escape, because it was a part of herself. She lay back against the breast of her friend in helpless, tearless anguish, as the life so precious to her was silently ebbing away. Sometimes she forgot her husband, and her mind and heart ran off after Roy. She was thus thinking of him, and wondering where he could be, and why he did not come home, when the doctor said:

"He is gone."

She looked up into his eyes, and then at the tearful faces about her a moment, questioning if he had not spoken of her boy. Then her eyes followed theirs, until they rested on the colorless clay on the pillow before her. The eyes were uplifted, and the features held in that solemn repose that only death can give, and then she knew the truth. John Mason had gone to God, and she was a widow.

John Mason was buried on his farm, beside the mother he had so tenderly cherished when he was young; and the first thing Mary did was to give that piece of ground, which these graves had sanctified forever, as a cemetery.

No search was made for Roy by the authorities; for Harry, although badly hurt, was recovering, and positively refused in any manner to appear against Roy. And after the people saw how heavily this blow fell upon John Mason, the man could not be found who had any disposition to follow the matter up; and the only desire was that he might somehow know how kind was the sentiment of the public toward him, and that he might return in time to see his father. Roy had been so true to his mother, that he had the regard of the entire community, in spite of the drink that had almost made him a murderer.

"It will be awful when he does come and find what has happened," said one, as the funeral procession was winding up the hill to the place of burial.

"Yes, I pity the boy from the bottom of my heart," was the reply. "We 'll all miss them both, Roy and the old man Mason."

These events had the effect to bring the two pastors together in something like fellowship, so that an exchange of pulpits, and interchange of thought was possible, and Mr. and Mrs. Windham saw the opportunity opening which they had long desired, of getting hold of the people who were under saloon influences. Their conduct all through those days of anxiety and trouble, had been so unselfish and Christian, that none could be unmoved by it.

It soon became known how John Mason had, as the last real work of his life, carried out and given to the waters the wine of his home, because he believed it to have been the cause of Roy's downfall; and how he had said that Mr. Windham was right in his

teaching. And this contributed to the changed feeling toward the radical minister; and the temperance question was invested, in the minds of many, with a sacred authority which it had never had before, from its association with the 'last words' of the dead. From that time people spake in different tones of the "Ohio business," and often retold the story of "John Mason's Crusade."

CHAPTER XXIII.

JIMMIE MONROE made an effort to get the 'ship's company' together after Roy left: but Fred and Claude had returned to college, and Archer, with all his recklessness, was too much impressed by Mr. Mason's death, Roy's flight, and Mrs. Mason's sorrow, to meet with them at present. Mr. Marsden had become alarmed, and prohibited Egbert from going to the club any more: but the remainder would meet and spend the time in drinking and gambling; sometimes, yes often adjourning to the room in the rear of the saloon, frequented by a gang of hardened men, and there taking lessons in vice from graduates of the school.

Mr. Brayton was profoundly moved, but could not yet be prevailed upon by his wife to give up entirely the use of wine, although he no longer frequented the hotel, or accepted a glass in public. But he would not listen to the proposition to use unfermented wine at his communion service, neither did he cease to denounce the crusade.

Mr. Monroe was disgusted. This whole affair had been so out of harmony with his plans; he had boast-

ed that no disorders ever attached to his place. Of course, the 'row and arrest' were in Diffenbaum's, and he disclaimed all responsibility for it; and yet, somehow, he could not make the people forget, that Roy went home that night from his place drunk, and was put in bed by his mother; for these things became known, and reflected no credit on him, in the eyes of even the people who had always voted to license his business; and he found himself classed with the 'low-down dram-shops,' in spite of his pictures, and the fact that he helped to support the church. And so he was out of humor with the whole thing. It was decidedly vulgar and sensational for John Mason to go off in that way; and as for Roy, he was fond of saying that he did not make him a drunkard; his own mother had herself to thank, and if the truth were known, it would be found, he thought, that Roy got drunk that night at home, instead of anywhere else.

To Mabel Brayton, all these things had come like the falling of hail, and the beating of a cold north wind over the summer land of her life. She and Roy were not engaged in the ordinary acceptation of the term, and yet it was an understood matter between them, that they belonged to each other. She had no thought of a future separate from Roy; he was a part of her every-day life, and had been, all these years; and she loved him deeply, and with a love that could believe no evil of him, and that would excuse anything she could not explain away. She thought Harry must have provoked Roy very much, and that, anyhow, he must have hit him accidentally

And of course she could see how he,—proud boy that he was,—when he was arrested and locked up, would get out and walk off. As the days passed, she wondered that not a word came to his mother, or to her; and then she thought he must have been hurt himself, and perhaps he had died by the wayside somewhere. She dreamed of a thousand things that might have happened to him, and was filled with unrest, and a sorrow, that was almost as hard for her to bear as that of Mary Mason herself. Mabel remained with Mrs. Mason during the sad, lonely days that followed the burial, and superintended the maid-of-all-work who came to take care of the neglected dairy and house.

Mrs. Windham was often at Mary Mason's. One afternoon, about a week after her house had been left to her desolate, she came to spend the afternoon; and as she sat by Mrs. Mason, as she reclined on the couch in her room, Mary said:

"I've been wishing the praying women of Ohio would come to Masonville. Oh, if they had only come before."

"My dear Mrs. Mason," said Mrs. Windham, "the praying women of Masonville must take this matter into their own hands; we must do this work for ourselves."

"Could we do such a thing?—Could we close up the saloons?" asked Mrs. Mason, with earnestness, partly rising.

"No; we could not close the saloons; only God can do that, but he can do it in answer to our prayers."

"I feel so guilty in this matter," replied Mrs. Mason, "that I fear the Lord would not hear me if I began to pray;" and tears came. "I am reaping the bitter fruit of my own doing. If I could only see Roy a moment, and tell him all about it, and ask him to forgive me, I think I could pray again as I used to do. John forgave me, and is at rest; I know he is with the pitying Christ, so I have some comfort in my sorrow for him,—but my boy! Oh, my darling Roy, where is he? and what is he doing? If he is going on and on down to death by drink somewhere, it is all the result of my sin."

"Dear Mrs. Mason," said Mrs. Windham, taking her hand, "you are the child of your heavenly Father, are you not?"

"Oh, I want to be,—yes, I am; but how I have failed to understand his will and word."

"Well, my dear, he knows all about how that could be, and he loves and yearns over you, as you do over Roy. Just as you do over Roy," repeated Mrs. Windham, as she saw Mary Mason catch at the thought.

"Roy didn't do as you would have had him do: but your heart follows him with tenderness, and goes up and down, searching for him, that you may teach him the truth which you have come to know, and lead him back into the safe way. In just the same way, only with a love and pity infinitely more tender, does your heavenly Father wait for you to look up, and recognize him as he comes to you with comfort. He knows our ignorance; you have prayed for light, and it has come in the only way it could have

reached you. Sometimes we build up walls without windows, about our souls, and if the light ever comes in, God must break something to make way for it. It was so with you; God has answered, and is answering your prayer, by terrible things in righteousness. And he invites you to come, 'casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.' If we were not ignorant, we would have no need of his light; if we were not weak, we would have no claim on his strength; if we were not sinners, we would have no access to Christ."

"Your words help me," said Mrs. Mason. "I knew all this once, but somehow it had slipped my mind, been crowded out by the darkness of my despair. My heart has cried out so for my boy, that I forgot I need Christ more. Pray for me, dear Mrs. Windham. Go to Christ for me with all this. I feel as if I might pray more truly than I have for days. Pray for me, and for Roy, that Christ may find him, keep him in sight, follow him, and save him in spite of his home, and his mother's sin, in some way."

So they knelt together, and as they prayed, the peace of God came to the heart of Mary Mason; the blessed Comforter came, and lifted her out of th darkness of despair, into the light of faith and hope, and she said:

"I can leave it all with God. He does pardon me, he does love and pity me; and he will make it as easy for me as he can. I do believe he will do the best he can for Roy and me under the circumstances and I am content."

There was something sublime in the quiet assurance with which this was said, that filled Mrs. Windham with awe. The two arose from their knees, and sat side by side with clasped hands, and began to talk over a plan for beginning temperance work in Masonville.

"I have thought," said Mrs. Windham, "that we had better find out what is our relation as wives, mothers, and housekeepers, to the law which 'regulates,' as they call it, the sale of drinks. We must move understandingly. For my part I know but little about these things. I have always, like yourself, led a very quiet, domestic life; doing what I could in the church; and while I am pretty well informed about some things, I know nothing about what the law expects of us, and what we have a right to expect from it. I have not desired to be led out in the regular crusade way; but I do think, we had better call our women together in a meeting, and talk it up, and pray about it, and see what the Lord would have us do. Will you join me in making such a call?"

"I will," replied Mary Mason, earnestly.

"And we will ask Mrs. Brayton to add her name," continued Mrs. Windham, "and if we can have the meeting in your church, it would be well, as it is more central. I will write it here now; I have a pencil and note-book in my pocket. When shall we meet?"

"This is Friday; let it be on Monday; that will give time for notices on Sunday," said Mrs. Mason.

"That's a good suggestion," replied Mrs. Windham; and she wrote rapidly a moment, then said "I'll read you what I've written: 'The women of

Masonville, who are interested in saving our homes from the ravages of strong drink, are called to meet for the purpose of considering our duty as wives, and mothers, and sisters, to our homes; our relation to the saloon, and the existing laws,—Monday next, in ——— church.' I'll leave that blank, until I see whether we can meet in your church. I suppose I had better see Mr. Brayton."

"Yes; yet probably it would be just as Mr. Marsden said; there's no doubt, however, about getting it."

"There it is; and I'd like your name first," said Mrs. Windham, handing her the paper and pencil. "You have the best right to stand at the head in this call; a right won by suffering and given by your husband's dying commission"

"I am willing to stand first," replied Mrs. Mason, "but I must not be considered a leader. I will follow, and work, but I cannot lead;" and she wrote her name to the call. Mrs. Windham placed hers beneath it, and then putting on her hat and cloak, took her leave, to see Mr. and Mrs. Brayton.

Mrs. Windham was cordially received by Mrs. Brayton, but when she stated the object of her visit, she hesitated, and said:

"I cannot sign that, Mrs. Windham, until I have consulted my husband. He is in his study; I will go up with it, if you will excuse me."

"Certainly; and will you please ask Mr. Brayton if we can say that the meeting will be held in your church?" asked Mrs. Windham.

"I will ask him, unless you prefer I should call him and let you make this request."

"It makes no difference whatever;—do not call him," said Mrs. Windham.

Mrs. Brayton was gone some time, and when she returned, it was with a troubled look on her face.

"Mr. Brayton thinks I had better not sign this," she said. "He thinks I had better wait until you decide what kind of work you will do; I will be at the meeting, however."

"Very well," said Mrs. Windham; "this is a matter between every woman and her own soul, before God, and her home. Did he think we could have the church?"

"He is afraid not; he does not think the trustees would be willing; they are very particular about what goes into the church; it is a consecrated house, you know."

"Yes;" said Mrs. Windham.

"I am very sorry you are disappointed, Mrs. Windham," said Mrs. Brayton, "but my husband has many things to consider."

"Oh, certainly; no apology is needed, dear Mrs. Brayton," said Mrs. Windham. "It is all right, as far as I am concerned; we shall hope to see you at the meeting, and Miss Mabel also," she added, as Mabel, in hat and shawl, was passing through on her return from Mrs. Mason's.

"What is that, Mrs. Windham?" she asked.

Mrs. Windham handed the call to the young girl, who read it, and returning it, said:

"Why don't you sign this, mamma?"

"It is not necessary, dear; we can go to the meeting just the same."

"We shall want the help of the young ladies, in this effort to put down the power of rum, so we shall expect you with your mother, Miss Mabel," said Mrs Windham.

"I am sure," said Mabel, "I shall be glad to do all I can to put it down. I hate it!" and the young girl's eyes filled with tears. "But your call doesn't say where the meeting is to be."

"At my husband's church;" replied the little woman, with a touch of pride in her tone, for she was glad she did not have to wait to inquire about the position which her husband or his church would take on this great question of "Jug or not."

Mr. Brayton was greatly exercised at the prospect of having a "woman's crusade turned loose in the streets of Masonville." For the sake of his boys, he wished there was no loafing place there; he did not "hob-nob" with Mr. Monroe any more, and was very much displeased that Frederick should manifest a preference for the saloon-keeper's daughter; but he was not yet ready to accept the crusade as a means of deliverance from the dominion of rum. When the notice of the proposed meeting was sent for him to read in church on Sunday, he was perplexed. He did not wish to read it, and he did not dare refuse. So he laid it on his desk, hoping he might forget it; but this he could not do, for it haunted him. And finally he concluded he might read it, without damage to himself, or his prospects, if he did not say anything for or against it; and he did so, remarking that he read it as it was, because of his personal regard to the ladies whose names were affixed, although it was a matter about

which he knew nothing, as they had not spoken to him about it.

The hour appointed for the meeting brought a great many women to the little Elm street church. Women from all ranks of society known in the town. Farmers' wives had driven in for miles from the hills, and from up and down the valley; there were the wives of miners, and merchants, railroad men, and mill hands. Mrs. Lawton, and Mrs. Marsden, and Mrs. Brayton were there. Mrs. Diffenbaum was not present, but sent a note to Mrs. Windham, saying:

"My heart is with you; but you will understand why I cannot attend your meeting. I bid you God speed."

There were the wives of drunkards, and moderate drinkers; and the young ladies were there; nearly every house in Masonville was represented in that gathering.

Mrs. Windham called the meeting to order, stated its object, and asked that a chairman and secretary *pro tem*, be appointed. Mrs. Mason was at once called to the chair. She arose to decline, feeling that her bereavement must excuse her. She had not been out since the funeral. But as she looked about, and saw the sorrow-marked faces of the poorer of the women before her, and noted how their hearts sprang into their eyes to greet her, as she stood before them, she said:

"I thought I must decline to take any part in this meeting to-day, but I see we are sisters in sorrow. I will shirk nothing; I am at your service." And she stepped forward to take the chair. Mabel Brayton was asked to serve as secretary of the meeting, as

she was known to be ready with her pencil, and she came and seated herself at the little table that stood before the pulpit.

All eyes were upon Mary Mason, as she arose, and opening the pulpit Bible, began to read the tenth Psalm. She hardly thought what she was reading She had begun where her eyes first lighted, but the wonderful words, in which inspiration drew the life-size portrait of the saloon-keeper, arrested her attention, and fastened the interest of the whole company.

"It is strange," she thought, "that I should have read this so many times before, and yet never recognized the likeness."

After reading, she announced, and they sang, "Rock of Ages," Anna Windham presiding at the organ; and then Mary Mason asked Mrs. Brayton to pray. She turned very pale, and hesitated. She had never done such a thing in her life, as to pray aloud outside the circle of her own home, but she could not refuse the request made by the woman, who with her own burden of sorrow heavy upon her, was ready to respond to any call. So she bowed on her knees, and in tones low and trembling at first, but strong and confident at last, she craved the divine blessing on the women gathered, and on their homes, and on all their sons and daughters, and all the people.

During the meeting, from her position, Mrs. Mason noticed that the door from the outside kept opening a little way, and once a hand appeared. Soon a lady sitting near, who had also noticed the same thing, arose, and quietly stepping forward, threw the door open, and revealed the form of Mr. Monroe

bending forward in a listening attitude. He sprang up, and met the eyes of Mrs. Mason and Mabel, and many others who were regarding him with suppressed indignation. He turned and fled in their sight, and the meeting went on as though nothing had happened. But from that time, Mr. Monroe was the recognized leader of the opposition; the embodiment of all that antagonized the interests represented by the home-keepers of Masonville.

The ladies decided to organize a Woman's Christian Temperance Union, of which they had just heard, and to move with deliberation and forethought to the work which they believed to be before them.

All Masonville was astir, as the ladies came out of the church, that afternoon. Crowds of men were watching their every movement, expecting some direct attack upon the saloons. The wildest rumors were afloat. It was reported that they had laid a regular plan of attack, and were to march down Main street, in solemn procession, singing as they went along the street, passing every saloon on the way, going directly to Monroe's, where they would lay siege, and "clean him out" first; when they would proceed to "investigate" the others. It was said the ladies had taken an oath, that nothing should be left of Monroe's when the sun went down that night.

The ladies were unaware of the interest they excited that afternoon. They were almost unconscious of being observed. Their hearts were so filled with a sense of the greatness of their mission, and the blessedness of the presence of God, that they had little thought for anything beside. It had not once

been proposed that they march to the saloons, hence they were not a little surprised when informed of the "alarming rumors" that had circulated on the street.

"Well, the wicked flee, when no man (or woman) pursueth," remarked Mrs. Windham to her husband, as they talked about it at the tea-table, Mary Mason being their guest. "It must be that God is in this. A few timid women could never fill a town full of men with such an alarm. I think I never saw a face so full of apprehension, as was Monroe's, in the little glimpse I got of him as Mrs. Walker opened the door."

"He is in trouble, no doubt," replied Mr. Windham. "I noticed him this afternoon, for I was about town, taking observations. He was restless, like a fish on hot sand, walking to and fro between his place and the church corner, keeping constant watch. I didn't know that he went in; I wish I had,"—and Mr. Windham laughed,—"I should have asked him for the news. Monroe is a bold, bad man; and he has been so profanely wicked, that I think he has alarmed his own soul."

"I could not help thinking of him, as I read that remarkable Psalm," said Mary Mason; "and I am glad to believe that the 'Lord hath seen it.' I wonder if he was listening then?"

"Perhaps he was," observed Mrs. Windham.

"Have you ever seen his bar-tender, Benton, Mrs. Mason?" asked Thomas Windham.

"No: I have never been very near his place. I instinctively avoid it," she replied.

"Well: I am deeply interested in that young

man. I have only seen him at the saloon door, or on the street; sometimes in company with George Newton, but more often alone. There is something about his appearance that haunts me. I wish I could get hold of him and save him."

"Who is George Newton?" asked Mary Mason.

"Yes: excuse me. I did not think but that you knew him. He attends our church regularly. He is a printer who came here with Benton a few months ago, some time early last winter. I don't see how the two come to be so much together. Newton tells me he is Benton's friend, and is here to keep him in sight. This is not a public fact: he told me this much in confidence the other day, when I was admonishing him to keep better company. He answered me that he knew what he was about: and one evening, in our prayer-meeting, he asked us to pray for him, that he might be successful in a great thing which he had undertaken, which involved the salvation of a very dear friend. I know now that he referred to Frank Benton. It is a very interesting case to me: and one which is beginning to burden me."

"Yes?" mused Mary Mason, "I should think so: I should like to see the young man."

CHAPTER XXIV.

IT was with much trembling that Mary Mason went to her work as President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. She had never since the days when she was a country school-teacher, been much outside her own home; and it seemed now, that she was being thrust out, crowded out by a monster that had come in and filled all the quiet places that had been made for her; and there was left no choice for her, but to go out into the world, and attack the very seat of the dragon's power, if she would have her home again. Only once in a while, however, did a thought of herself come in to divert her from the one purpose which she had fixed in her mind, which was to do the work which she had been given by the dying words of her husband, and for which she had been commissioned of God, and prepared in sorrow. She felt that she had something to do for the boys of Masonville. Her lonely heart took them all in, and especially those who had been associated with Roy in any way. The 'ship's company' became a centre of interest to her, and she felt willing to take any position, do any work, make any sacrifice that would

render it possible for her to save those boys from the ruin that was fast overtaking them.

Among the first things the women did in their meeting, was to get the books containing the State and municipal laws, and "read up." They found that the saloon was under the actual protection of the law, and that provisions were made for its prosperity and security, as truly as for the life and prosperity of the home.

Our little Mabel had been made secretary of the permanent organization, and it was her duty to stand and read the law to the meeting. In the course of her reading of the local ordinance, she came to a clause which read "As many saloons may be licensed, as the public good shall require."

"I wonder what that means?" she said, looking at the audience of women, and then turning to Mrs. Mason. "I think that's about the strangest combination of vowels and consonants I ever saw."

"I think it would take a lawyer to explain how a saloon can conserve the good of our little city," said Mrs. Windham. "I think we had better refer that to Mrs. Walker, and commission her to 'ask her husband at home' about it, and tell us to-morrow at the meeting."

And it was "moved," "seconded," and "carried," with parliamentary precision, that Mrs. Walker be so instructed. And next day the lawyer's wife came, prepared to unfold that wonderful system to the assembled women.

"Mrs President," she said, addressing the chair, "Mr. Walker explained the principle of license to

me; but I must say, at the beginning, that it does not satisfy me at all. He says that liquor will be sold, anyhow, because there is a demand for it. The demand creates the supply, he says; and that it is a traffic which, being expensive to the government, in the matter of making necessary an increase of police and pauper provisions, it should be compelled to pay back a portion, at least, of its profits into the public treasury. So they grant a license, and charge a good price for it, and so get back part of what the saloon costs to the city."

"But," said a poorly dressed woman, the wife of a miner who spent all his earnings in the saloon, "why don't the city pay it back then to us? I'd like the three or four hundred dollars that my man has paid the saloons of Masonville the last year."

"Yes, yes," came from all over the house. "Let the city pay it back to the women."

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Windham; "and, Mrs. Walker, what did your husband say about the 'public good' part?"

"I asked him about that," said the lady, "and he said that the good consisted in choosing the least of two evils: the free traffic with its little ill-favored doggeries, 'not fit for a decent man to go into:' or the license system, which reduces the number of saloons, and admits only of 'respectable places.' I told him I should choose the ill-favored doggeries, to the gilded trap of the gin palace. He said, 'That is just like a woman.' I asked him if our nice respectable boys would be apt to go into the hole-in-the-wall, to learn to tipple and treat each other? He only laughed, and

started to go out, saying that we women 'have a way of looking into things farther than the law allows.' And now, women," she said, in an earnest tone, "I begin to get an idea of the work before us. We've got to meet an institution that has back of it the law, and the money, and the political power, as well as the appetites of men. And it looks to me very much like a case of the women, and the home, *vs.* the men and rum."

"But some men are on our side," said Mrs. Windham.

"Yes: a precious few," rejoined Mrs. Walker. "And they are so few, that we may well say with David, 'Vain is the help of man.' For one, I expect but little help in this work from any man. And sometimes I think we may about as well give up before we begin. No:" she cried, quickly, "I don't mean that: we can't give up: we have no choice but to go on, and do something, if no more than to put our homes and society on record against the iniquity of this traffic. But I see that we will get no help from the law. My husband is the best man in the world, but I do not expect he will place himself in out-and-out opposition to the law, which protects the saloon. He lives by the law. How much we may expect from the gospel, the fashionable gospel of the day, I do not know. I have my doubts, as I remember some of the teachings of even my own church;" and she looked at Mrs. Brayton. "We may just as well understand the situation, and count the cost before we begin: the men will be again

Mrs. Walker's words produced a profound impression. For a few moments it seemed to those women as though they had indeed fallen upon times when 'every man's or woman's foes should be those of her own house.' But after a moment of trembling, fearful waiting, Mrs. Windham's cheery voice broke the silence.

"Ladies," she said, "let us remember that this is not a war, after all, but a work. A work of lighting up the dark places; of repairing the waste places; of planting the deserts, and of house-cleaning. This is not a conflict between man and woman, but it is a coming up of woman, to do the work which she has left undone all these years. The men have been in some sort of way laboring with this question, for years; but we have not been doing our part. While they have been at work at the laws, and trying to get something that could enforce itself, we have been withholding the very power that must enforce the law: for that always comes out of the home. I don't want to say anything cruel, dear women, but as Mrs. Walker says, we must understand this matter, and the existing relations. The saloon is the fruit of a plant that grows in the homes of this people, from the wine cask, and the cider barrel. And the appetite for drink, that makes the men of Masonville willing to support the saloon—although it is so expensive an item of luxury, that they only expect to get back a small part of the cost, in the license fee—is a thing that has developed from the use of the domestic wine and cider, and the brandy sauces, of the cook-book. It is hard to say this;" and Mrs. Windham

felt the tears come to her eyes, as she saw how these words cut home to the quick of some of the hearts before her. Many heads were bowed, and there was a sound of weeping; and she felt almost afraid to go on.

"You speak the truth, Mrs. Windham," said Mary Mason, at length. "I know it is the truth;" and a murmur of assent passed over the audience.

"The truth is what we want, no matter how it cuts," said Mrs. Wright.

"Well:" continued Mrs. Windham, "I believe this is the truth; and the thing for us to do first, is to cleanse our homes and society of the uses, and practices, and customs, that have made the saloon a possibility. We must kill the root. Of course the seed is in the fruit, and will keep sowing itself in the laws and in the lives of men, and will give us a great deal of trouble yet, and keep us very busy; but let us kill the home-root first. This is the very first work: let us pledge ourselves to total abstinence in every department of our world. Banish the cider, and the wine, and brandy from the sideboard, the kitchen, and the medicine chest; let the voice of the home be for total abstinence, and prohibition; for purity everywhere, and that spirit of self-denial that cuts off everything that tends to self-indulgence. Only by taking a principle like this as the basis of our work, can we accomplish anything. And let us remember that the men are one with us, in this, as in every other interest. We cannot separate ourselves from them. They are in our homes: our fathers, brothers, husbands, sons; there can be no war between men

and women as such. Our work is for them ; et us do the best we can to supplement what they have already done, and then we can take a new hold all together—men and women, home and church, society and law, and together work out a plan for the salvation of our country from the great curse."

Mrs. Windham's little speech was greeted with a dainty womanly round of applause; and as she sat down, many about her realized that light had come into their minds, and they saw as they had not done before, the real nature of the work in which they were engaged.

A committee was appointed to draw up a pledge, which should embody the purpose of the individual concerning the drink usage. When the pledge was presented the next day, some few objected to the cider clause, and others wanted an exception made 'in case of sickness.' But the majority were in earnest in the matter, and were ready to banish the cider, and wine, forego brandy flavors, and depend upon something beside hot toddy for breaking up a cold. So the pledge was numerously signed, and the union began to look outside its own circle for work.

Some ladies, however, from this time ceased coming to the meetings. Mrs. Marsden had never attended since the very first, and Mrs. Brayton did not sign the pledge, although Mabel did.

The ladies met daily for one hour, and prayed and planned, and finally decided to canvass the town with the pledge, and a petition to the town board asking that no license be granted for saloons during the coming year.

The town was districted, committees appointed, and every house, shop, place of business, saloon, and the mines and mills were to be visited; and every man and woman invited to sign both pledge and petition.

The incidents of this canvass would fill a volume We will recount but few.

Diffenbaum's saloon was in the district given to Mrs. Windham and Mrs. Mason.

"I am glad your name is Faith, dear Mrs. Windham," said Mary Mason, as they started out together. "I like Harry and his mother, very much, but I am afraid of Mr. Diffenbaum, I think."

When they entered with the papers in their hands, both father and son were in, beside several loungers. Mr. Diffenbaum, half intoxicated, as he nearly always was, came to meet them; while Harry, with a look of shame on his face, stood behind the desk, where he was posting the books.

The ladies handed the papers to Mr. Diffenbaum and when he saw what they were, he indignantly tossed them back, and turned away. They passed on into the room, speaking to all, until they came to Harry. He took the pledge from the hand of Faith Windham, and read it carefully.

"I can't sign this, Mrs. Windham," he said, in a low and sad tone, "for you know I have to handle the stuff: and your pledge is against that. It should be. I may be able—the time may come—some time. I will sign your petition, gladly, Mrs. Mason.* Then turning to his father, and speaking loudly enough to be heard by all in the room, he said:

* Harry Diffenbaum is a real character. This is a true incident.

"Father, I'm going to sign this petition. It is a petition, praying the town board to issue no more licenses in Masonville; and that means, to shut up this place."

"Well, well," said the old man, gruffly, yet with evident pride in his boy, "sign, if you want to;" and walked off to the other end of the saloon, while Harry, laying the paper on the desk, wrote his name in a bold round hand. He returned it to Mrs. Mason, saying:

"I do hope you will succeed in your work, ladies. You have my best wishes."

He followed them to the door, and held it open for them to pass out; and Mary Mason, with a warm light in her eyes, turned at the door, and gave her hand to the boy. She spoke no word, but her lip quivered, and her face was eloquent, as she looked up into Harry's. And he understood her, and his own heart was touched. He had nothing to say; but he thought of Roy, and this thought was expressed to the mother, in the pressure of his hand, as well as in his speaking face.

"Harry is a mystery to me," said Mrs. Windham, as they walked away; "do you suppose he drinks at all?"

"I never thought about that;" replied Mary Mason.

"It would be strange if he does not; brought up in it as he is," replied Mrs. Windham. "I was surprised that he signed the petition; though, after all, I think I should have been disappointed if he hadn't."

"I could not have borne a refusal from him;" said

Mary Mason. "The boy is very dear to me. I think I expected him to sign both pledge and petition."

"Yes?" replied Mrs. Windham; "but of course he must have left his father's business, if he had."

"I should think he would," said Mrs. Mason. "I don't see how he can stay; he is too nice a boy to sell drink. Did you notice what books he had on his desk?"

"No, I did not notice."

"He had a Grecian History, a Latin grammar, Bryant's poems, and a German Bible."

"Strange books, to be found in a saloon," said Mrs. Windham; "but he is a remarkable boy, with such a father. Yet, I suspect Mr. Diffenbaum is to-day, what drink has made him. And the great difference between Harry and his father, may be, after all, simply a matter of drink."

The two ladies went in and out of all the places on the street, on their mission, and were nearly always kindly received, and followed with interest, both by those who signed and those who refused.

"Mr. Marsden's bank, as well as residence, are in our district, I see," said Mrs. Windham. "I wonder how we shall be received there?"

"Politely, of course," replied Mary Mason, "for the sake of their two sons."

They went first to the bank, and, as soon as their errand was known, were regarded with manifest interest by cashier and clerks; some of whom signed both pledge and petition.

"Would you like to see Mr. Marsden, ladies?" asked the cashier, as he returned the papers, without

his signature, however. "He is in the office;" and he came around, and opening the door, ushered them into the presence of the man, who probably thought he weighed as much in influence, as any other ten men in the county. He arose and met the ladies, offering them seats, but with a frostiness in his manner, and tone, that was not inspiring, at least. Mrs. Windham made known their errand at once, and said:

"May we not depend upon you, Mr. Marsden, to help us in gaining this object? We rely upon your influence in the board."

He made no reply for a moment, but sat with the head of his penholder in his teeth; then suddenly turning his revolving chair squarely toward them, he replied:

"You can depend upon me for one thing,—opposition to the bitter end."

He made an impressive pause. Neither of the ladies made any reply. These words were too terrible to be fully comprehended at first, and after a moment, he continued:

"I don't believe in this thing at all. I disapprove the whole business, from Ohio to Masonville."

"I am very sorry for you, Mr. Marsden," replied Mary Mason, at length, rising, "for you have two fine sons; and such a beautiful daughter;" and they withdrew, leaving the great man, with his angry reflections for company.

"It will take a little courage to call on Mrs. Marsden, after this," said Faith Windham.

"Oh, she is the mother," said Mary Mason; "and will regard our work from a woman's standpoint."

"Yes, possibly;" said Mrs. Windham; "but you know, she has never been to any of our meetings since the first."

"I know; but she is a very lovely lady. I have known her socially, and in our church, even before the railroad came. They spent all their summers down the valley a few miles, for years; and Nina is a sweet girl."

They rang the bell at the door of the elegant mansion, and were shown into the parlor. Mrs. Marsden, a little plump, fresh-faced lady, looking not more than thirty, although she was forty-five, in a dainty costume, soon joined them, and greeted them with the most exact civilty, but with a flavor of her husband's temper manifest, in spite of her sweetness.

Faith Windham went on bravely, however, revealing the purpose of the visit—presenting the papers for Mrs. Marsden's signature. She took and glanced at both; then dropping them on the table beside her, she said, with scornful hauteur:

"I will have nothing to do with the affair. I think it is the business of the men to attend to all these things. I attend to my home, and leave politics to my husband."

"I once thought as you do, dear Mrs. Marsden," said Mary Mason, with her heart in her face, "but—now"—

"Well, yes;" interrupted Mrs. Marsden, quickly. "If my son had disgraced me, I presume I might feel differently about it. But I am sure, I should then, less than ever, want to show myself in public."

Mary Mason flinched, as the point of this lance

probed her wounded heart; and Mrs. Marsden went on:

"I think it is a shame, for a woman to go into a saloon, as I am told the temperance women are doing. I believe in temperance, and went to the first meeting, but I soon saw it was leading off into fanaticism, which is the worst form of intemperance. As for your pledge, I have no use for it. I keep and use wine, and shall continue to flavor my sauces, and pies, as we prefer, without that kind of interference from without. I have spoken frankly, ladies, for we may as well understand each other in this matter at the first." And the lady arose. Mrs. Windham and Mrs. Mason also arose, and taking the papers from the table, turned from the parlor; and left that house covered with the scorn of its mistress: and she closed the door behind them. Their hearts were burdened with the sense of coming sorrow, to that mother and her home.

"I can see what is before her," said Mary Mason. "I cannot resent anything she said, for dear Mrs. Windham, I might have received you in the same way a few months ago. I only hope the same heroic treatment will not have to be employed in her case as in mine."

It was with a heart almost breaking, that Mary Mason turned homeward, after that day's work. Sometimes the constant excitement of the strange life she was living these days, so lifted her out of, and away from everything she had ever known, that she thought of John and Mary Mason, and their son Roy, and their home, as something she had once

known of, of which she might have been a part; and with this spell at work in heart, and brain, she could go up and down the streets of Masonville so unconscious of self, that pain was forgotten. But when she would turn into the old path that led up to the farmhouse, and come upon the unchanged scene of her life, and love, and sorrow, and remember that she was herself the Mary Mason whom she had known, and for whom her heart had been aching all day; that Roy Mason, the wanderer, was her own Roy;—then would the great burden roll down like a stone from a dark mountain on her heart, and prostrate her for hours. And nothing but God, to whom she clung with the grip of a life-long habit of trust and obedience, could have had power to deliver her from the dead weight of a sorrow, that seemed eternal in its hopelessness.

During the long sleepless nights, she would lay plan after plan for trying to find Roy; but nothing seemed feasible. She had hoped that Mr. Lawton might get some clue; and he promised to do all in his power. He was so disgusted with the manner in which Roy had 'turned out,' that he could have 'gotten mixed up in such a muss,' that he had not much desire to find him, himself; for he had not 'time to fuss' with any such material. Yet he was interested to have some one find him, who would have time to take him and make a man of him.

Not a night passed, that Mary Mason did not go up to Roy's room, and kneeling beside the bed that was kept in readiness for him, make her confession, and prayer in his behalf. God only knew the struggling,

wrestling spirit, that she always brought into that chamber. The light always burned at night in the sitting-room, and the incoming train never sounded its signal, and a foot-fall never approached the house, the gate never opened and shut, but her heart would quicken, and then almost stop in its eager listening for the coming of her boy.

Thus passed the busy days, and the lonely nights in sad and patient endurance, and endless watching; and the most careless eye could see how it was all wearing into her strength, and consuming her life.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE petition was duly presented to the town board; and the 'temperance women,' who read this story, will know just how it was done. It met the usual fate of such prayers from women to municipal and legislative bodies. It was referred to a committee, and considered,—reconsidered, voted upon, and 'not granted.'

The Women's Christian Temperance Union then settled down to the life-long task of creating a public sentiment, out of which should come forth power and a hope of deliverance.

The history of this movement in Masonville, would be that of a hundred others; with their 'mass meetings,' prayer meetings, 'Gospel meetings,' and personal visitations, and juvenile work, and 'reform work;' for all these things came into their plan as the years passed.

These women had in them the spirit of perseverance, and could not be discouraged or frowned down, or laughed at, or insulted. They kept on in their persistent, aggressive crusade against the saloon.

They began a regular system of saloon visiting, with tracts, and invitations to the Gospel meetings;

and many were the experiences they gathered in this work.

The first time they did this, Mary Mason and Faith Windham were appointed; and they started forth, armed with leaflets, and full of the spirit of self-sacrifice ; courageous, yet trembling. A resolution had been passed, that they should do no talking in the the saloons, but pass in and out ; quietly distributing their leaflets to each person.

These ladies had never entered Monroe's place. During the canvass with the petition, this had been given to others, as Mary Mason felt that she was not strong enough to face the man who had so sought her husband's ruin. And to-day, as they came to the door, her limbs trembled ; but she followed, as Mrs. Windham led into the place, which was full of loungers. Mr. Monroe arose, and left, as they entered ; and they went to each group and passed the tracts. Mary Mason's attention was at once arrested by the bar-tender. He was a fine-looking young man, of about twenty-three, but bearing unmistakable signs of vice. He stood behind the bar, with his arms folded, leaning against a barrel that stood on a block. His face had become deadly pale, and there was a strange twitching of the upper lip, that his dark mustache could not conceal. Mrs. Mason reached a leaflet across the bar to him. He took it with his right hand, and held it before him, in position for reading ; while his left arm was still closely folded across his breast, and his eyes were fixed on Mrs. Mason's face.

Mary Mason's heart was stirred with deep interest

Her cheek flushed, her eyes glowed, and her lips parted as if to speak. His glance dropped beneath hers. She longed to say:

"Young man: leave this place and go home to your mother." But she did not, and turning, she passed out with her companion. As they closed the door, and stepped out into the street, Mary Mason said:

"I can hardly leave him behind that bar."

"Whom? The bar-tender?" said Faith Windham.

"Yes: I didn't think but you and I had the same brain just then. I was moved by his face: I wanted to speak to him, in spite of our resolution."

"Why did you not, then?" asked Mrs. Windham.

"I hardly know. I wish I had dropped something in there so I would have to go back: I am sorry I did not speak."

"Shall we go back?" asked Faith Windham, pausing.

"No-o-o. I think not:" replied Mary Mason, slowly, and with indecision, yet walking on. "But I shall always wish I had spoken."

"I think that must be the bar-tender my husband referred to the other day," said Mrs. Windham.

"He told us his name:" said Mary Mason, trying to recall it.

"Yes: Frank Benton. He would be handsome but for that bloated look."

"Yes: and I can never forget him, and that I did not speak the word that came to my lips." And Mary Mason sighed heavily.

That night and the next, the young bar-tender was in her thoughts almost constantly; and she planned to visit Monroe's again that she might meet him, and have the opportunity to speak the words that had become such a burden to her. She determined to speak to Mrs. Windham on Sabbath, as they almost always met on the way home from their respective churches. So she watched for her, that day, and as she saw her with her husband coming from their church, she walked toward them. As they met, she said:

"I was waiting to tell you that I must go to Monroe's and see the bar-tender. I cannot rest until"—

"Dear Mrs. Mason," interrupted Mrs. Windham, "we were going to see you, to tell you what will, I fear, be sad news. Frank Benton is dead."

"Dead! dead!" exclaimed Mary Mason.

"Yes, he is dead:" was the reply.

"And I never spoke to him! Oh, oh, is it possible! How did it happen? When did he die?"

"This morning," said Mr. Windham; "and the circumstances, as they have come to light at last, are very sad. You remember I told you he had not been here long; and it seems he is here under an assumed name. He is from a Christian home, but got into bad ways somehow, and left home. Newton has followed him for the last two years, trying to save him for his mother's sake."

Mr. Windham was interrupted by a smothered cry from Mary Mason, who had grasped his wife's arm as if to save herself from falling.

"Oh, dear Mrs. Mason," he exclaimed, springing

to her side, "excuse me. I ought to have thought how painful this would be to you: you are not able to bear it. Take my arm—we will walk home with you."

Mary Mason felt the strength all going out of heart and limbs. She took the proffered arm, and they walked slowly up to her lonely home. She led the way to the sitting-room, leaning still on Mr. Windham. He seated her in an easy chair, and Mrs. Windham removed her bonnet.

"Shall I call Maggie?" she asked.

"O no: please go on now. I must hear the rest about that poor lost boy." And she began to weep.

"Well," continued Mr. Windham, "as I said, George Newton has followed him. They came here together just a little before Christmas. Newton tried to keep him out of the saloon: but he had an inordinate passion for drink, and gambling; and beside this had become reckless, desperate, hopeless, and naturally drifted in with the crowd at Monroe's, and finally went behind the bar. Yet Newton staid by: he shared his room with Benton always. He has seen that he was going down fast these last few weeks, but still has had hope of saving him. He said it seemed that he must be able to save him and take him home. It seems that Benton went down to the saloon every Sunday morning, to straighten up, shake the stoves and fill them, and so forth. Last night he was restless, and got up early and went out, leaving Newton in bed. When he returned, some time after, Newton noticed that he looked sick, and asked him if he was not well.

"'No:' said Benton, throwing himself across his bed, 'I'm sick: I'm done for, George.'

"Newton sprang up, saying he would go for the doctor, but Benton objected.

"'No, George,' he said, 'it's no use: it is the end. I'm done for at last: and George, I'm only a bar-tender, after all.'

"But Newton ran for Doctor Giles, and returned with him in a few moments, and found the poor fellow just about gone. He aroused himself once and looked up, and saw George, and grasped his hand, which he held with a death-grip; and once he gasped, 'Only a bar-tender;' and so he died.* Newton is inconsolable."

"Oh, this is dreadful!" sobbed Mary Mason. "I wonder I dared leave him that day when I felt so about it. Poor boy! And his poor mother! Oh, good friends, what can I do? Will anybody let my boy die like that? Would any Christian mother fail to speak the word that might save him?" And Mary Mason clasped her hands to her head in an agony of regret.

"Dear Mrs. Mason," said Mrs. Windham, "I knew this would hurt you, and I told Mr. Windham we must come and tell you first; but you really must not take it so. It is not at all likely that your Roy will ever be like that young man. But, dear, you remember that you gave him into the hands of your Heavenly Father: and"—

"Yes: so did she, his mother," interrupted Mary Mason. "You say she was a Christian woman: and

* An incident known to the author.

then somebody beside her loved his soul well enough to follow him to try to save him. Yet it all failed, and he has died like this!"

What could they say to her? There was no comfort to be brought from any treasury of words, and they were silent, until at length Mr. Windham said

"Let us pray."

And they knelt in silence for some moments; then in a tone but little above a sigh, Mr. Windham prayed; and then, on her knees, again before God, Mary Mason found the power to wait and trust on.

"And yet," she said, as they arose, "I am afraid I wait and trust because there is nothing else for me to do."

"That is right, dear," said Faith Windham. "If there were anything else you could do, you would be required to do it, first. God never does anything for us, that we can do for ourselves, and gives us no right to trust him until we have exhausted our own resources."

"Yes, that is true," replied Mary Mason; "and he knows I would do—I would endure anything to be able to go back and do anything, however hard, that would save that boy, or any one from temptation, or sin, or trouble."

"Yes, dear;" said Mrs. Windham. "He knows that; and you have a right to trust, and not be afraid."

"I can but be afraid," replied Mrs. Mason. "There are so many things for me to be afraid of."

"O yes;" said Faith Windham, "there are plenty of things to make you afraid; and no one knows it

better than he who says to you 'Fear not.' It is not because there's nothing to fear, but you are not to be afraid, because he is with you; and he is stronger than the 'biggest fraid ever was,' as my baby calls it. God is mightier than the lions, stronger than sin, death, hell, and the grave; so trust, and not be afraid."

"Yes; that is all true. I knew it once, but had forgotten," said Mary Mason. "How I forget about God. I will try; I will trust; but my heart is very sore, very weak. You are such a help to me, dear friends;" and she held out her hands to each. "I thank you, and I thank God that he gave you to me. But now, what is to be done about Frank Benton? Will Mr. Newton take the remains home? or send for his mother?"

"Neither," replied Mr. Windham; "that's another strange thing about it. George says he shall never let his mother know of his end. He will bury him here to-morrow."

"What did the doctor say was the cause of his death?" again questioned Mrs. Mason.

"Heart disease; a dropsy caused by the life he has lived. Drink is at the bottom of it all."

"I wonder what effect it will have on Mr. Monroe?" said Mrs. Windham.

"I presume none whatever, beyond vexing him, because it brings his place into unpleasant notoriety," said Mr. Windham. "But have you heard how he is affected by your temperance work?"

"I have not," said Mary Mason, "since the very first."

"He is distressed every time you have a meeting," replied Mr. Windham. "And they said, the last time you had a mass meeting, he raved until he actually had to go to bed. And his wife said the other day, that if the women didn't stop their meeting, and singing, and praying, they would kill him. I am told that he had a godly mother, whose heart he broke years ago. Jimmie Monroe said, they'd prefer a crusade, for they could set the dog on the women, or throw scalding water on them, or lock them in, or have them arrested, and sent to jail; but this way of going from all over the country into the church, ringing the bell, and praying, was the meanest way of doing that could have been invented."

"Well," replied Mary Mason, "I don't want him to die; but I do want the blasphemy of his saloon stopped. I want him to repent, and be forgiven. I feel like leaving him with God. He knows better; he is intelligent, he has been well taught; the very pictures on his walls attest his profane defiance of God. But there—I think I have said enough. It might have been said of me, 'she knows better.' You, may be, have thought just this about me. I live in a house too much made of glass, to throw stones at Theodore Monroe. I am ashamed of those words. If God would forgive me, he will Monroe."

"Provided he repent," said Mr. Windham.

"Yes; if he repent. O that he may repent and be saved."

The next day, Mrs. Windham and Mary Mason went with Mr. Windham, to bury Frank Benton. Mary Mason stood beside the casket that contained

the remains, and remembered he was the son of many prayers; and that in spite of these, and in spite of the work that had been done for his rescue, he had gone to appear before God, with the filth of an evil life clinging to him; and the dark shadow again fell upon her soul, and it seemed vain for her to hope for deliverance from the endless sorrow of unanswered prayers.

She had given directions that his grave should be made beside her own dead, and as she stood, leaning by the casket for support, holding a hand of Faith Windham, she said:

"I have only this comfort. If I ever meet his mother, here or in eternity, I can tell her, I did care for his poor dead body at least, if I did fail to speak to his soul."

The two were alone for a few moments in the room, and Faith Windham replied:

"How do you dare say, you did not speak to his soul—as you stood there and looked at him, with your motherly soul in your eyes? I think he understood; and that probably you said all you had to say to him. At least, it is safe to so conclude; and now leave him with God."

"I must do that," replied Mary Mason; "and I do believe that God will do for him the very best he can under the circumstances."

"And," said Mrs. Windham, "I don't believe a soul ever goes out of this life unsaved, who would, under any circumstances, accept Christ. God will find an instrument somewhere to do his work, for every human soul. If you or I will not be used, he, whose resources are infinite, shall not lack. He will pass by

and over the unwilling, or unready tool, and find or make one that he can use. It makes more difference to us, than any one else, whether we do our particular work or not. It makes more difference to you than to Frank Benton, that you did not speak the words you should have spoken that day. If we do not do the required work for any soul, God will find some one who will; and that one will take the star that might have been in our crown, and perhaps the crown itself."

"And yet we are,"—began Mary Mason.

"Yes," interrupted Faith Windham, "we are held responsible, just as though eternal disaster should result from our neglect. It behooves us to be very faithful, to live in the secret place of the Most High, that we may be able to understand the slightest movement of His Spirit; so that we lose no opportunity of doing his work,—of saving a soul from death."

CHAPTER XXVI.

FRANK BENTON'S death cast a shadow over Mary Mason from which she seemed unable to recover; and an incident which occurred a few days after, added much to her distress, and contributed to the burden that was crushing her very soul.

Mr. Marsden had, as already intimated, no patience with the work of the temperance women. He gave Mr. Brayton to understand, that the reading of the notices of their meetings was an offence, and must not be continued; and that Mabel should not be allowed to continue as secretary of the W. C. T. U. And Mr. Brayton obeyed; for he did not wish to resign. It could but be known by all, that a sharp contest was at hand. The lines were being closely drawn; drawn straight and taut, and they ran through the church, as well as through political and social circles.

Mr. Marsden was especially annoyed with Mrs. Windham and Mrs. Mason, and accused them of turning the town upside down. He said boldly, so that it came to her ears, that he shouldn't think Mrs. Mason would undertake the work of reforming a town when she had so failed in her own home. She

had better see about her own son, before she talked about other people's.

One day, as she was passing wearily and shrinkingly along the street, just having parted with Mrs. Windham, with whom she had been saloon-visiting, she saw Mr. Marsden coming toward her on his way to the post-office. He had seen them coming out of a saloon, and was angry; so when she saw him she noticed a frown on his face, and yet was satisfied he intended to address her. She paused and said:

"Good morning, Mr. Marsden," while her pale cheek flushed as she recognized his antagonism to her. He did not return the salutation, but in an abrupt and angry tone, asked:

"What is the reason, madam, that you women don't go home and attend to your own affairs? If you would attend to your homes, you'd get along all right: and that is all we would ask of you."

For a moment Mary Mason did not know what to say to the tone or the words: but very soon the strength needed for the hour surged through her heart and veins, into brain and soul, and with a new light in her eye, and power in her words, she replied, voicing the reply of the home to the challenge that had been flung at her again and again.

"We are attending to our affairs, Mr. Marsden. It may be a little late in the day for some of us, but we are doing all we can find to do."

"Well, well," rejoined he, "these public meetings, this going about the streets, noise and confusion, we think,—the town board does,—that it is about time it is stopped."

"Yes," replied Mary Mason, it is about time:— time that there were no longer any need. And I tell you what we will do; we will go back, as you say, into our homes, and hold no more meetings, visit saloons no more, if you gentlemen of the town board will do one thing."

"Well, what's that?" said Mr. Marsden, gruffly; "grant your petition, I suppose."

"No, not this time: we don't expect that any more, and we will allow you the necessity of the licensed saloon, with its revenue; we will say nothing more about that."

"Well, then, what is it?"

"We will ask you simply to devise some plan by which the liquor business can be done by machinery. Make an automaton to place behind each bar in this village: and automata to trundle along the streets, and file into the saloons, and deposit the dimes and nickels, while the automaton behind the bar slings the glass, so that the little form of traffic that is so necessary to the prosperity of the town may go on: do this, and we will be silent."

Mr. Marsden looked at her with contempt expressed in every feature. By this time they were surrounded by a crowd that had accumulated one by one, as people had stopped in their progress up or down the street to "see the fun."

As Mr. Marsden made no reply, Mary Mason went on.

"But no, you will not do this: you take our boys You must have the saloon, anyhow; but its value would be at an end, its occupation gone, did no one

go to ruin that way. You'd have no further use for it, if the men could all be saved, reformed, made Christians in truth. We have found out what this business means to us. There is a trap-door to death behind the saloon bar: and other trap-doors all along the way that the staggering crew must tread; and every little while the foot of a man touches the spring and the door flies open beneath him, and he goes down into a drunkard's grave; and every time it is some mother's son. Shall I tell you about Frank Benton? He came out of a Christian home. His name was covered by a thousand prayers, from just as tender a mother, and true a woman, as is the mother of your sons. What did that saloon mean to that woman and her home? Oh, how was she impoverished, that the revenue for Masonville should not fail! What is all this to a woman? Look, Mr. Marsden! What is it to a man to fail in business, to put his whole life, and energy, and time into an enterprise, and then see it go down, and he lose all he has invested? All that it could be to you to fail in business, and infinitely more, is it for a woman to fail in her son. All that a woman is that is pure and good and true, she invests in her boy. He is the result of her best work, with brain, and hands, and feet; for him she has given nights, and days, and work without stint; and yet you say it is nothing to her that the saloon monster, out there, stands ready to eat him up! You say to her, 'Go back into your home:' you want her to shut the door and keep out of sight the scenes enacted in town boards, and saloons, and at ballot-boxes. You expect her to take

her infant son upon her knees, and sing to him the sweet songs of the church, and teach him the pure precepts of the gospel, and bring him up fair and noble as a boy can be; and then, when he is just a little taller than she, and it don't take long for that, you expect her to send him out into the world you have made for him out here, set with traps and snares, that you may catch him in your net, and draw him into your 'gin mill,' and grind him up into devils' meat! And you expect her, his mother, to still sit at home, and smile on, and sing on, and act just as though the work of her hands was a perfect success, and her every hope had been fulfilled. There are women, dead under a burden of unanswered prayers, and women alive to-day to whom life means but little, because of the sons that have gone to ruin in spite of their love, and work, and prayers of faith. And yet you bid us 'be still!' No sir!"—and her voice rang out with a bell-like tone. "No sir! We have awakened at last! We have found out what this means to us; we have repented of our own complicity with the demon of the wine-cellar and cider-press; we have cleansed our homes, and we shall never be silent, before God or men, until this curse is removed; until you men, who have the power to say what shall or shall not be in the city or State, learning wisdom by the destruction of your own sons, shall invent some means of meeting the expenses of the government without grinding up our boys for market, and turning their purity and strength into an article of commerce, to be exchanged for death and corruption,

at so much a glass—a per centum of the profits to go to the treasury of the State or city."

Mr. Marsden had recoiled from Mary Mason as she spake these words rapidly, and with the passion of her own love and sorrow in tone and look; and as she ceased, a murmur of applause, low and respectful, came from the crowd that had stood spell-bound under the magnetism of her earnestness. She looked about her as she was recalled to herself, and a flush hectic in its brilliancy mounted to her pale cheek, and a timid quiver convulsed her lips; and she turned away, and with her eyes on the ground, walked rapidly home. She went directly to Roy's room, which had become her closet of prayer, and throwing herself prone upon the floor, she sobbed aloud, and prayed. "Oh," she cried, "how dreadfully true are the words I said! God only knows how true they are. I am a bankrupt. I have failed, miserably failed. God's truth has no pity for me. It is the truth that slays me. I spread the snare in my own home which has tightened its cords about my boy, and by which he has been drawn away;—whither?

"Oh, my Roy! my strong, manly Roy, how I have gloried in your strength! You must come back to me! I must find you, my boy. O God! tell me where he is! You know! tell me, tell me before I die!" And she clenched her hands in agony, until the nails almost pierced the flesh. "I cannot save anybody else; it is as Mr. Marsden has said; I must save my own boy. I cannot do anything for Masonville."

Months passed, and seasons changed; and Mary Mason lived alone in the desolate house. She rented

the farm to a thrifty young man, whose wife cared for the dairy, and did whatever Mrs. Mason required for her comfort, leaving her free to go about in the temperance work, which she could not lay down, and which yet was a constant accusing spirit at her side. Her hair grew white, and her face more thin, and transparent, and saintly every day; and she stood before the people as the embodiment of the spirit of Reform. It made no difference to her what she was called upon to do, she did it with a quiet steady perseverance, which could not be discouraged or disturbed, and which commanded respect even from those who would have silenced her if they could. She led the gospel meetings; distributed tracts; presided at the women's meetings, or the public mass meetings, with equal ease and self-forgetfulness. The liquor men were afraid of her, and watched her movements with superstitious vigilance. Mr. Monroe manifested his uneasiness more and more as the months passed, and changed visibly. The boys who had been Roy's companions kept out of her way, although her heart yearned over them to do them good.

One day, in the spring, as she sat at her open door and looked out over the scene beneath her, she noticed the Gazelle lying at her dock. She had laid there all winter, but had never made her presence felt to Mary Mason as at that moment. A flood of feeling surged through her, and for a moment it seemed that her brain would give way under the terrible pressure of thought and emotion, and for a time she yielded to the uncontrollable influences; but after a few moments she lifted her head, and said:

"This is fruitless. I must not spend myself thus; there is too much for me to do, to undo the past. But what can I do more? I can at least wait, and give God time, without fretting. I wish I could reach those boys. Even Archer and Frederick seem afraid of me. This will I do: I know God does hear prayer. I will pray for those boys by name, as I have never done before, every day. I will take their names with my own Roy's before the Lord. I will claim the promise of God in their behalf; I will never rest until they are rescued."

In keeping with this plan she looked up a little memorandum book, which she had bought for Roy once, and which he had never used, and with pen and ink she wrote the names of the ship's company, with Roy's at the head of the list, and then going up to his room she gave it to the Lord, name by name, and plead for the help of the Holy Spirit in this which she had undertaken.

And as the months passed, day after day she went to the place of prayer, and plead her cause. Thus she worked and waited, and the farm-house on the hill-side came to be regarded as a centre of influences, which, while they antagonized sin and vice, did speak in the interests of humanity, and for all things pure and true, and of good report. There were those who never looked toward that place but they remembered that they were sinners, and that Christ had died to save them. Mary Mason did not know this; but she did come to know something of the peace that comes in with the abiding Christ. But those who loved her thought they beheld tokens of the ripening spirit that was rapidly outgrowing the frail body.

CHAPTER XXVII.

O you've been drunk again, sir, and are just out of the calaboose? I'll not have you about the shop another day."

"But, Mr. Stewart"—

"No time for words. I have the story here in the morning paper, full account, all the interesting particulars, together with the fact that you are one of our men. I'll pay you off; though that's throwing money away, for you'll drink or game it away before night."

And the speaker, a fine looking man, the foreman in a large machine shop, laid down the paper from which he had been reading, and writing an order for a small sum on the cashier, he handed it to a young man of perhaps twenty-two years, who was standing with the air of a criminal at the office door. He was of massive and symmetrical build, but bore the impress of vice in every feature of what should have been a noble face, and of poor keeping in every article of his dress.

"But, Mr. Stewart," he said again, "I didn't mean to get drunk or fight, but"—

"No more, sir: haven't time;" interrupted the foreman; "take your pay and be off."

And Roy Mason took the paper and walked slowly out of the office.

"Well," he said, "here 'tis again; and I must move on. Ten dollars! Well, I'm glad I've got lots of money, if I haven't a 'character.' I'll start on and see if I can strike a job before this is gone."

He went and drew his money, and then walked on down the street with the slow slouching gait of the man without a purpose, revolving in his mind what he should do next.

"I'll get out of this town first," he muttered to himself. "I've had nothing but bad luck here from the first day I came into it; nothing but bad luck anywhere, curse it all!" And he kicked a cobble stone that happened to lie in the alley through which he was taking his way out of town, and sent it spinning on before him.

"Cursed luck!" he continued, clenching his fist and grinding his teeth. "Here I am, a great fellow, able to do most anything, shoved from one town to another, pushed, kicked, growled at, denied work that I can do better than the most of them, if I didn't serve apprentice. Of course, the excuse is every time, that I get drunk: but I don't drink such a plaguey sight more than the rest of them. Why I should be pitched out every time, get locked up every little while, is more than I can account for. They say I'm a fighting fellow, dangerous when drunk. Well, 'twould make most any man dangerous to be set on, as I've been every day. If I could get a suit of

clothes once it would be different, I suppose; but I haven't got money enough together once, since I left Masonville, ages ago. I lose my money somehow. I do look hard, that's a fact:" and he looked down at his tattered clothes and ventilated shoes. "Wonder what's become of my watch? And I do believe I've got into somebody else's rags. I look as if I'd been among thieves—hard customer, anybody 'd say;" and a sullen heaviness arose from his heart to his brow.

"'Dangerous!'" he muttered. "Yes, I might be: it's in me." And he ground his teeth again.

"But oh, mother, mother," he groaned, "is this your Roy? Mother, mother, father, Mabel!" And a great lump came into his throat, and a dull aching pain back of his eyes, and he staggered on, bowed under an invisible but heavy burden, until any one would have thought him an old man instead of our Roy.

He walked on until he began to feel very tired and faint, from lack of food. He had spent the last three days and nights in a debauch, which ended in riot, and arrest, and confinement in the calaboose, and the payment of a fine. During those days he had eaten but little, and had not broken his fast that day; and hence, after the strength of his passionate despair had been somewhat spent, he found himself well nigh exhausted, and feeling really too sick to go on. He was in the country, and the road was skirted by cultivated fields, and clumps of fruit trees, and dotted with neat farm-houses. He turned in at the gate before one, of inviting appearance, and started around to the back door, intending to ask for and buy a

bowl of milk and bread. But he had hardly turned the corner of the wing, when an ugly growl greeted him, and a great dog came toward him, showing his teeth, and challenging his approach. Roy reached out his hand, and spake kindly to the animal, but he replied with another growl, and snapped savagely at his feet as he started to move forward. Roy stood irresolute, wondering if he could not get past the dog, and thinking of Napoleon; when a bright-faced little girl of a dozen years came round the corner of the house, saying, in a sweet voice, "Jowler, what is it?"

But the moment she caught sight of Roy, she sprang back with a cry of terror, exclaiming, "Oh, mother, it's an awful tramp!" and in an instant he heard the door shut, and a bolt spring to its fastening. He turned and beat a hasty retreat, with Jowler barking at his heels.

"A tramp, a tramp!" he said: "has it come to this?" and the cry of the frightened child was a spur to his lagging strength, as it stung his heart and brain.

The dog made sure that he was rid of the intruder, and turned back to the gate, where he sat watching him out of sight; while Roy, with a strange feeling of desolation, yet with a touch of defiance thrilling every nerve, hastened on westward, for the time forgetful of physical weariness or hunger, in the stinging sense of degradation that followed the words of the child, and the menace of the dog.

"Dogs always like me," he muttered: "and a child? I couldn't hurt a child; a sweet-voiced little girl like that. Oh, oh, what would my Mabel say?"

He went on until he came to a lonely looking wooded place, where a brook had cut its way down into a deep bed, and gurgled and murmured to itself drowsily, as it loitered among the willow roots and the piers of the rustic bridge. There was something in its tone that touched the heart of the boy soothingly, and wooed him from the highway; and turning aside, he followed the stream up into the wooded pasture, some distance, and throwing himself down on the bank, he looked over into the slowly eddying current as it glided beneath him, and dreamed of the dear scenes he had left forever; of the life he used to live; of the boy he used to be; his father and mother and home; the beautiful Gazelle, and the dear little maiden who had become a part of himself. He thought of that day in the Glen, so long ago; of his search for Mabel, and how he found her singing his mother's sacred old hymn; and then suddenly there flashed into his thought the words of his mother, as they all stood looking at the place where the ledge fell. Speaking of his escape, she had said: "You have been saved for a purpose."

"Yes," he sighed bitterly, "a purpose; what a purpose! Better I had been crushed that day. I wonder if there is really a God, after all." Then he reviewed the things that had happened to him since that dreadful day when he probably killed his friend and became a wanderer, and he wondered, as he had done many times before, during the past two years, what they were doing at home, and what they had done about him; if the officers had given up trying to find him. He shuddered as he thought of the sorrow there

must be in his home. He knew Mabel had cried; but yet he had no experience of life that would make it possible for him to fully dream of the terrible results of his rash act. He thought, that, after all, no sorrow could be quite like his own; an exile, and a tramp; all his proud strength wasted, his bravery departed; he, Roy Mason, who had made that engine, and had been almost like a king among the young people of Masonville. His misery was too terrible to seem real. He could not weep; but he lay there with a dull leaden pain in his heart; silent, motionless, until at length exhausted nature prevailed, and he sank into a deep slumber, with the soft sound of the water in his ears.

The life that Roy Mason had lived during these two years had been a terrible one. When he first went away from Masonville he was well dressed, and had a noble, manly bearing, and good address, that could not be lost in a day, and which was a passport to confidence and favor anywhere; so that at first he got along very well, although he carried the consciousness of disgrace, which goaded his self-respect with every thought. His drinking habits, and familiarity with the saloon, however, were against him; they brought him into the company of bad men, and in the state of public excitement during those crusade days, when it was found that he belonged with the 'saloon gang,' he was looked upon with suspicion by the people who might have done him good had they but known. He never went into public places, if he could avoid it, for fear of being discovered and arrested. But for this he might have drifted into

some of the temperance meetings, and learned the truth which he must learn if he is ever saved. He never went to church, for there seemed nothing there for him. He was like a ship in a storm, dragging her anchor. He would get a job for a few days in a place; his quickness and ability served him well; but he was sure to get drunk and be discharged, and 'pushed' further on. After a while his clothes grew seedy, and he began to feel that he looked ill-favored. He lost gradually the self-respect which had given him his distinguishing nobility of bearing, and he became outwardly, what he had felt himself to be ever since the key of the calaboose door turned on him, that night in Masonville;—a disgraced and guilty man.

I doubt much if Mary Mason would have recognized her boy, had she seen him that day in which we have followed him, as he strolled along the highway, a well-developed tramp in his every appearance.

Roy had never thought of attributing his misfortune to drink. He considered his wine just as necessary a part of his daily fare as his bread and meat. He knew that he ought not to drink whiskey or brandy, and he never intended to do so; and he could not think how it was, that he was always being defeated at this point. He went from wine or cider to the stronger drinks, in spite of himself. Roy Mason belonged to a class that cannot be reached by ordinary means: who, if they are ever saved, must be sought after, with the diligent, patient love of the Good Shepherd, who searched desert and mountain for the lost sheep; or of the woman, who with lighted candle and broom, searched for the lost piece of silver

Roy had thought of the crusade as he passed through Ohio on foot, in the first week of wandering, but he kept away from the towns from motives of safety; and so had not been touched by this influence, which might have awakened his sleeping soul by its power of song and prayer, that must surely have reminded him of home and mother. But Roy would, after all, never have thought of his mother as a crusader. Nothing in her teaching had prepared the heart of her son to receive the gospel of temperance, that was flooding the land with truth, even if its life-giving tide should at last beat against his stranded craft.

Roy slept the sleep of exhaustion that afternoon and night, as he lay beside the little river in the shelter of the wooded pasture, and awoke late in the morning with a sound of grazing near his head. He looked up, and saw a herd of milch cows, that had evidently been turned in from some farm-yard near by, after milking. Roy saw here a chance for breakfast, and availed himself of the opportunity afforded by the gentle creatures, that seemed not to notice his rags or his degradation, but were so generous to the poor tramp, that his hunger was satisfied; and he looked up with some degree of courage, into the quiet face of the new day. He went down the embankment to the brook, and took a refreshing bath, and then started out on his journey. He determined that he would keep right on until he came to some town, before he made any attempt to supply himself with rations, for he felt that he could not again approach a country house and be greeted as a tramp.

A little after noon he came to a town of consider-

able size, into which an express train was steaming, pulling up at the station just as he reached a crossing. He stood waiting for the train to move, and watching the passengers as they alighted. He here caught a momentary glimpse of a familiar form, which was, however, as soon hidden by the throng—all but the hat, which he followed with a thrill of joy, in its way out and in. He was about crowding himself forward to grasp the hand of an old friend, feeling very much like the Roy of other days; when suddenly he remembered his rags, and that he was recognized only as a tramp, and had the life of Harry Diffenbaum on his hands and soul; and turning quickly about, he retreated a few steps, then stopped with an impulse like that of hunger almost, just to get one more look at the man, and make sure it were he.

"Yes, that's Briggs," he said to himself, as the man stepped out into view. Their eyes met; but Roy, with the quick instinct of self-defence, fearing recognition, looked blankly at the eyes that flashed with joyous surprise for an instant, and then were clouded with doubt, as they regarded him. And then turning, he walked over the crossing, as though he were the most indifferent man as to his surroundings that could have been found in ten cities.

Briggs, however, was not satisfied, and ran after him.

"It seems like Roy, and yet not; but we can't afford to lose the least clue," he said. And then, as he noticed the slovenly form, and unmanly gait of the figure before him, he paused and said,—

"It cannot be: and he certainly would have

recognized me, and—but I don't know. If it is Roy, he wants to get away from me. How proud he was that night! It cannot be Roy Mason."

Briggs stood in abstraction a moment, thinking what course he had better pursue in this matter; and meanwhile Roy had passed behind some freight cars, that were standing on a side track, and slipped into a restaurant saloon, and was out of sight when Briggs looked about him again.

"I'd give anything to know that that fellow is not Roy Mason," he said, as he turned toward his hotel. He said the same thing again and again during that afternoon as he went about the business which had brought him to the city; and directly after his early tea he started out on a search for an answer to this question, that would allow him to rest, at least.

"I cannot sleep until I know," he said. "Those eyes were so like Roy Mason's, that I cannot rid myself of the fear that it is he. It would be dreadful to find him like that."

Roy had but one purpose before him, as he stepped into the saloon, and that was to escape Briggs. With a quick backward glance, he saw that he was following him, or had been walking in his direction, but was not at that moment looking at him; and seizing the opportunity, he turned and sprang behind the empty cars, and seeing the restaurant at hand he entered. Finding that he was not followed further, he took a seat in a retired corner, and ordered dinner. The waiter eyed him suspiciously, as he gave his order, which was an ample one.

"You needn't look at me that way!" said Roy,

angrily. "Bring me what I have ordered, and a glass of wine."

"Yes, sah," said the waiter; "but you don't look like gemmens what pays for such dinnahs."

"Well, never mind the looks, I shall pay for it just the same," said Roy; and he took the ten dollar bill from his ragged vest pocket, and had the pleasure of seeing the charm work; and he was quickly served. He ate like the hungry man he was, and the glass of wine was soon followed by another, and another; and when he left the table, it was to go into the saloon, and join the noisy crowd who were singing, and drinking, and gaming.

The day passed into the evening, and Roy had become very much at home. He had drank a great deal—treating and being treated; until at last the bartender had reason to believe he had gotten about to the 'bottom of his pile;' and, as usual, when intoxicated, Roy began to grow belligerent. Among the crowd, was a young fellow with a bright face, and good voice; who had been entertaining the company with songs of various kinds; and at length he exclaimed:

"Say, fellows! hush up, and I'll sing you the best thing out—a regular crusader. I learned it of th praying women." And after a moment of mock solemnity, the sweet words and air of the sacred old song, so associated with his home, and mother, sung in a falsetto voice, greeted Roy's astonished ears.

"'Nearer, my God to thee,
Nearer to thee;
E'en though it be a cross

That raiseth me;
Yet, all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee.' "

Bad as Roy had become, and drunk as he was, there was something in him, that arose to resent this profanity; first, because it was profanity against his mother, and Mabel; and then, because it outraged every instinct of his soul, which was yet alive to sacred things. In an instant, he was standing before the singer, with his tall and massive frame erect, and squared for battle; and the sweet and tender pathos of the hymn which had been well learned, was rudely broken by the peremptory order:

"Silence! how dare you sing my mother's song in this place?"

"Ha! ha! his mother's song!" shouted a voice in the crowd, that stood closely about the singer; "he looks like the son of a crusader."

"Who's that that says such a thing?" shouted Roy.

"I did, you son of a crusader!" replied a bully, swagging toward him, while the crowd began to form a ring about them, and Roy was making ready to fight.

"Here! none of that!" cried the bar-tender, leaping over the bar, and coming in between the two, "none of your fighting here."

"I don't care to fight anybody," said Roy, "but that fellow that did the singing; he's my man: and I'd like to skin him."

"Well, you can't do that here," said the bar-tender; "and you're getting altogether too troublesome, and you'd better get out."

"Yes, put him out the back door, the tramp," shouted one. "The son o' that Nearer-my-God-to-thee-woman," cried another; and they gathered closely about him. The bully seized one arm from behind, while another man did the same by the other, and he was literally lifted by the roughs, whose many hands made light work of even this, for Roy was too much demoralized by his scant fare and hard life, and the dissipation of the day, to make any successful attempt at resistance; and he was partly carried, partly dragged, struggling, and cursing, to the back door, and thrown out, head first, into the narrow alley.

The saloon stood very near the track of the railroad, and from this back door, there was a sharp descent of several feet, made by grading the road-bed; and the force with which Roy was ejected from the door, caused him to roll over the embankment. He turned a summersault in the fall, striking his head violently on the stony ground, and alighting on his back, with his head pressed against the embankment, and his feet extending over the track of the railroad; and thus he lay motionless, as though already dead.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE night-watchman had been his round, and found everything all right, and taken his station at the switch; for it was time for the freight train, that here waited on a side track for the express; and in a few moments, the shrill sound of the whistle rang out; the head light streamed along the track, and the freight train labored with much ado past the station. The switch was drawn, the engine reversed, and the heavy train came breaking down, with all its murderous power on the track, in the rear of the saloon, and the cruel wheels ground and crushed their way over the limbs of the unconscious boy. He was aroused for an instant by the thrill of agony that shot through his frame, and cried:

"Oh—mother,—Mabel,—God!" and sank again into utter unconsciousness.

A brakeman, who was coming down the side of the car, over the ladder, heard the cry; and as soon as the slackened speed admitted, he leaped down, and ran along the track, until he came to the mangled form of Roy Mason. Assistance was summoned from the train hands, and the 'poor tramp,' as they called

him, was carefully lifted by pitying hands, and laid in the waiting-room of the depot, and a surgeon sent for.

A curious crowd gathered about the shutter, on which Roy lay, and from which the blood was running to the floor; and among them, there were the saloon loungers, who had had their share of responsibility in the accident; and many from the express train that had just come in, and waited here some moments. All were sober, and filled with sympathy for the unconscious sufferer.

The young man who had sung in the saloon, stood at one side, with his face covered with his cap, after the first look at Roy, which blanched his cheek, and filled him with a strange horror.

"He looks like a hard fellow," remarked a strong, clean-looking man, with a business air.

"Yes, poor fellow, a victim of drink," replied one with a benevolent face, and the appearance of a clergyman.

"How in the world did it happen? Who is to blame?" asked a sharp-featured little man in a high key, flying about and questioning the bystanders with the industry of a reporter, and the zeal of a gossip. At last the brakeman, who had found him first, returned with a surgeon, and replied to the questioners:

"Our train was backing down on the side track; it it had been coming head first the engineer would have seen him, poor fellow, and he might have been saved; but we were backing. I was hanging on to the side of the car ready to let myself down as soon as she slowed up, and I heard a cry below me. It was all

dark: 'O mother, Mabel, God,' it said; and I knew some poor fellow was under the wheels. I let myself drop, and ran along the track till I found him."

"Poor boy!" sobbed a lady, coming forward from the crowd and standing beside him. She withdrew her glove, and laid her hand on his forehead, and the surgeon proceeded to make his examination.

The crowd stood silent and awe-stricken at the appearance of the lady, who with the soul of a mother manifest in every expression of her sweet face, with its crown of snow-white hair, bent above the unconscious boy, while tears hung on her long lashes.

"Are you going out on the train, ma'am?" asked the brakeman, at length, respectfully lifting his cap.

"O no, not on this train; I am going to a hotel to wait a train on another road in the morning," she replied, suddenly remembering.

"But surgeon, what of this boy?" she asked. "I heard them say he is a tramp. No one knows him."

"Yes, so I understand," replied the surgeon, "'the way of transgressors is hard;' I don't know what we will do for him. We have no hospital; we can take him to the county house, perhaps, but it is a long way, and I doubt if he lives, anyhow. There must of course be amputation. He might possibly survive this, and get well, if he had the mother he called for, or 'Mabel,' whoever she is, to take care of him. He's a splendid fellow, physically, but much the worse for the life he has lived. He's too fine a fellow to have gone to wreck like this."

"I would like a word with you, sir," said Mrs. Stan-

ley, moving away from the crowd. When they were sufficiently apart from the rest, she said:

"I am taking a western trip by the advice of my physician, not that I am an invalid; but—well, I cannot explain what may seem strange to you, but if you have a mother, sir, you may find a solution of the problem. I have money, and none beside myself, unless I can find my—my own boy—can you understand? I will stay here, take this poor boy, who cried for his mother, with me to a hotel;—the best house, please,—and take care of him for his mother's sake; do as I would that some Christian woman should do for my boy if that were he. Do your best for us, and I will see that you are fully paid."

Dr. Winters looked at her in amazement a moment; then his eyes filled, and he said:

"God bless your womanhood, madam! I understand; I will do as you say; but we must really waste no time, if we save him. I have stopped the blood by cords, and we will move him at once, and see what can be done. The Summit House is the place. I will send for a carriage for you, and get men to carry the boy."

Roy was borne by willing hands, on a litter, to the Summit House, where a pleasant suite of rooms had been placed at Mrs. Stanley's disposal.

Roy was supposed to be her son, and the whole city was moved the next morning by the sensational story that appeared in the 'Morning Herald,' and which Willie Briggs read at his breakfast, of how a lady, of singular beauty, in spite of the fact that her hair was white as snow, who had come in on the

evening train from the east, had found her long-lost son in the person of a tramp, who, while intoxicated, had been run over by the cars, and suffered the loss of both limbs. The story got abroad also of the affair in the saloon, and added no little to the interest in the case; although the fact of his having been thrown from the back door was modified into an account of how he had been put out of the front door, and had staggered down the alley, and reeled off the embankment, as he was very drunk.

Willie Briggs sat with the paragraph before him, and pondered:

"I cannot get rid of the impression that I saw Roy Mason yesterday," he said. "I must know about this affair. Is Mrs. Mason here? This description might be of her, as I saw her last. Is that boy Roy?"

When Roy was disrobed, and laid on the bed, to await preparations for amputation, Mrs. Stanley took her station at the bed-side, and began in earnest the work of saving the life of the stranger. He had been dressed in a clean night wrap by the surgeon's kindness, and after Mrs. Stanley had washed his face, and brushed his hair, he was found to have retained much of the manly beauty for which he had been distinguished. A bruise was found on his head, and yet nothing that would of necessity destroy consciousness for any great length of time; but he had suffered a terrible shock, and was weakened from loss of blood, so that his condition was extremely critical.

"He will not endure the amputation to-night," said Dr. Winters; "if he rallies we may hope to perform the operation in the morning: but he may sink and

die before midnight. I will leave you a few moments to make the necessary preparations, and I want to call in a brother surgeon for counsel. I will order a servant to be in waiting in the next room if you should need anything; and if he should rally while I am out, give him a spoonful of this brandy."

Mrs. Stanley looked at the bottle that the doctor placed on the stand, and then at him; but did not reply. The doctor took his hat, and went out; and as soon as she was alone, she took the bottle to the dressing-room, and pouring its contents into the wash-bowl, turned on the water, and let it run, until it ran clear and pure. Then she rinsed out the bottle, so that no odor of the liquor remained, and set it back in its place, filled with water. She then ordered of the man in waiting some extract of beef, to be prepared at once. This done, she sat beside the bed, with her hand on the head of the still unconscious boy, and counted the seconds before the doctor's return.

But few moments passed before he came, accompanied by his friend; and the two doctors took their stations on either side of the bed, and examined Roy's pulse, and respiration, and the bruise on his head.

"Suspended animation from nervous shock," said the counsel. "I think he will revive; now let us look at the legs. They passed down to the foot of the bed, and began examining the crushed extremities, while Mrs. Stanley sat on the bedside, watching Roy's face. As the surgeons proceeded, she noticed a twitching of the muscles of the mouth, and in a moment he groaned and opened his eyes, with a wild, startled look, and a cry of:

"Oh,—don't!—my foot!"

"My dear boy," said Mrs. Stanley, pressing his head gently with her hand, "don't move."

"Where am I? What is this?" gasped Roy, making an effort to rise.

"Don't move; be still," said the gentle, sympathetic tone again. "You have been hurt;—badly hurt;—the cars ran over you; the surgeons are examining your limbs;—you are in the hands of friends; can't you trust your friends?"

"Who are my friends?" asked Roy, wearily, and in a faint voice.

"I am; and this gentleman,—Dr. Winters; and we're going to take good care of you."

"Thank you;" replied Roy. "But oh, I want my mother and father," said Roy, and closed his eyes, while his chin quivered.

"Where is your mother and father?" asked Mrs. Stanley; but there was no reply.

"Will you not tell me?" she began; but the doctor interrupted her.

"Never mind about that just now, madam, but give him a spoonful of that brandy;" and without waiting for her, he stepped to the stand, and took up the bottle.

"Why. what is this?" he said, quickly turning to Mrs. Stanley.

"Simply that I do not use brandy, doctor," she said; "but here is some extract of beef instead, which will be better.

"Very well, madam," said the doctor, flushing hotly, for a moment; but adding gently, "it is your

right to say, I suppose; perhaps the substitute will serve the purpose."

"It will, indeed, doctor;" she replied, "and in this case serve a better purpose."

She placed a few drops on Roy's lips. He did not notice it, until she had forced his teeth apart, with a gentle pressure; then he swallowed, and again opened his eyes, and took what she gave him, while he looked her steadily in the eye, with a questioning expression.

"You wonder who I am, my boy," she said, as she wiped his lips with a soft napkin.

"Yes," whispered Roy.

"I am one dear boy's mother," she said, "and I'm going to take care of you, as though you were that boy; until your mother can come."

"Oh, don't send to my mother," gasped Roy. "I'd rather die."

"Won't you tell me where she is? her name?"

"No, no, never let her know; anyhow, not till I can get well, and be good, and go home as I ought to."

"My dear boy, dear, dear boy!" murmured Mrs. Stanley, as she turned away to hide her tears.

And even the eyes of the surgeons were wet, as they thought of how he would go home, if ever. Dr Winters drew Mrs. Stanley into the parlor, and said:

"He must be kept very quiet now, madam. He must not be allowed to suspect the situation, but must sleep; and take as much of the beef extract as possible, until morning, or until his strength comes up. His only chance is, in being able to survive the amputation, which must be made to-morrow. We

will leave you alone with him now, awhile; please watch him closely, until I return."

Roy was sleeping when Mrs. Stanley returned, and took her station at his bedside. She watched him with deepest, prayerful solicitude, through the hours of the night, and the slowly coming dawn. Sometimes, as she sat with her hand on his wrist, it seemed that his heart had stopped its work forever; then it would flutter, and go on; but after midnight, he seemed to gather strength, and as the morning approached, his pulse became steady and firm, and his breath came with deep respiration, like that of a child in healthful sleep, although there was with every expiration the sickening odor of the liquor he had drank.

Mrs. Stanley could but notice this, and many and sad were the thoughts that kept her company.

"He has a noble face," she thought; "but for the mark of drink, almost faultless. Oh, how his mother's heart has mourned; I know it, I feel it. O God, let me save this boy, and take him to his mother. And oh, please let me know about my own."

Dr. Winters came in the early morning, and found Roy still sleeping.

"How has he been?" he asked; and Mrs. Stanley told him the story of the night's care. The doctor touched his wrist.

"This is good," he said. "He is coming up finely,—better than I could have hoped. Has he taken much of the beef?"

"Yes, quite a quantity."

"Very good: have something for his breakfast that

will be very nourishing when he awakes. We will let him sleep awhile: poor boy, it will be a sad awakening. I will remain in your parlor: my assistants are here: when he awakens, let me know."

Another hour passed. The doctor came in and laid his hand on Roy's breast, over the heart, and he opened his eyes and exclaimed:

"Why, why,—what's this?"

"Just the doctor, my man; you've been having a fine sleep: ready for breakfast, I guess, by this time?"

"I don't feel hungry," replied Roy, lifting his hand to his brow. "Say, doctor, what's up with me? My feet! O yes:" he said, as Mrs. Stanley came to his side, "I remember you: where have I seen you before?—You are like my mother. You said I got hurt. Oh, well, I guess I'm better now: yes, I would like some breakfast. I feel faint—quick!"

Mrs. Stanley sprang to the sideboard and brought some of the beef tea, and lifting his pillow slightly, pressed the cup to his lips.

"Drink this," she said, "and then we'll have you a nice breakfast."

"That's nice;" he said, after he had drank. "Thank you;" and Roy looked into her face with an expression that made her eyes fill again. Mrs. Stanley rang for the breakfast which had been ordered. It was soon brought, daintily dished, and she sat on the side of his couch and fed him.

"This seems funny," he said, with a little faint laugh, "to be fed like a baby. I never was sick before. I should feel all right now, but my legs hurt. Are they very bad, Mrs. Stanley?"

"Pretty bad," she replied, calmly as she could, "but you must have your breakfast, and then we will talk about it. How does it taste? Is there anything you would like that isn't here?"

"You are very kind, ma'am," replied Roy, "and if it wouldn't be too much trouble, I would like a glass of wine."

"A glass of wine?" repeated Mrs. Stanley, in surprise. "O, that wouldn't do at all, my dear boy; but what name shall I call you?"

"Roy—Roy's my name."

"Well, Roy dear, I'm going to do all I can to get you well; but don't ask for wine, or any such drink, for I cannot give them to you—and I can't bear it." Tears came again to her eyes, and Roy saw them.

"Oh, well, never mind," he said; "I don't care; only I kind of hankered after it, been used to having it always, if I had anything, that's all; and I didn't suppose it would hurt me any."

"You shall have everything that can be had that you ought to have," said Mrs. Stanley, tenderly; "and by and by we'll talk about the wine. Will you have any more of the toast—or anything?"

"Nothing more, thank you;" and Roy turned his face away and closed his eyes, and Mrs. Stanley went out with the tray, and leaving it in the hall, joined the doctors in the parlor, and reported that he had finished his meal.

"I will look at him a moment," said Doctor Winters, withdrawing to Roy's room. He soon returned, saying:

"I think he will stand it. He is in better con

dition than I expected or dared hope; but it will be necessary now for him to know all. Mrs. Stanley, it will devolve on you to tell him."

"That his limbs must be amputated?"

"Yes."

"That will be a dreadful thing to do."

"Yes: but you can do it better than I; better for him. We shall be ready soon, and it must be done now, as soon as possible."

"Oh, God help us! Poor, poor boy!" sighed Mrs. Stanley, as she started to perform the painful task. She found Roy looking about the room restlessly, until he saw her; then he smiled faintly, and said:

"I'm glad you've come back."

"Thank you," she replied, and sat down on the bedside and took his hand, while her heart throbbed painfully. She knew she must speak at once, if she had strength, for the task; so she began, with his eyes scanning her face.

"And now, Roy, I must tell you something; the doctor says he must cut off your legs; and"—

"What's that you say?" cried Roy, trying to lift his head from the pillow.

Mrs. Stanley laid her hand gently on his brow, and repeated the words in a calm, steady tone:

"The doctor says he must cut off your legs."

"What's that for?" said Roy, in a short quick tone, and then went on rapidly:

"Pshaw! He can't do that! Why, what can I do without any legs? I can't get along without legs."

"Roy, my dear boy," said Mrs. Stanley, "it is not a question of whether you keep your legs or not,

but whether you live. You must be told, hard as it is—but you cannot live as you are. Your legs are nearly gone now. You were lying on the railroad track, and a freight train ran over them and crushed them all to pieces, below the knees; and now the only chance for your life is, that you are brave, and quiet, and patient—a good boy; and pass through the operation like a hero, and then get well. I can't tell you how my heart aches for you," she said, tenderly, as Roy's great dark eyes, filled with the surprise of the great calamity, were fixed on her face. "And I will do anything—we all will; anything to help you; but much depends upon yourself."

"Do you suppose that doctor knows?" asked Roy, with sudden energy.

"Yes:" was the reply.

"Do you think they've got to be cut off?"

"Yes"

"What makes you think so?" still questioned the boy.

"Because they're all crushed: there is nothing to make legs out of."

Roy closed his eyes and lay perfectly motionless, his hand resting in hers; tears came stealing through his lashes, and trickled over his cheeks. Mrs Stanley wiped them softly with her handkerchief, while her own face was wet. At length, after many minutes, during which the doctor came and stood at the door in silent waiting, Roy looked up, and while his lip quivered, and sobs choked his utterance, he said:

"Well, I submit—I deserve it. The Lord may

have his way with me. It's time, I guess. Tell them I'm ready. But wait—say—oh, my mother!" and he sobbed aloud a moment.—"Say, will you stay by me while—they—do it?"

"Yes, dear boy, I will."

"But now,—maybe I'm asking too much—maybe you can't—stand it—to—to see it."

"O yes, I can. I will stay by you."

"With your hand on my head, please?"

"Yes."

"Thank you. You are so good to me.—Did you say you've got a boy?"

"I—yes—God knows. I'll stay by you like your mother."

"Well, then, tell them to hurry up and have done with it.—Say, doctor!" he exclaimed, as he turned his head and saw Doctor Winters in the room, "hurry up! will you? and get this business out of the way."

"Yes, my man," said the doctor, cheerily, dropping his fingers to Roy's wrist. "We'll have it done before you could say Jack Robinson, and have you all tucked up, to be petted by the best nurse a boy ever had; and by us all, in fact; until you get well. Then we'll set you up on a famous pair of cork legs, that'll keep you out of the way of the cars, I'll bet your life."

"And out of the saloons!" observed Roy, in a low, trembling tone.

"Yes, out of all such places."

"Well, maybe I'll be a better boy on cork legs than I have been with two good ones," replied Roy; and so a little comfort stole into his heart, as he watched the dismal preparations.

It seemed to him, that the room suddenly became full of men. He could not see Mrs. Stanley, and he kept turning his head, and rolling his eyes. Doctor Winters noticed this, as he was about placing the ether to his face, and said:

"There she is, just back of your head;" and Roy looked up over his head, and saw her, and a bright warm smile came to his face.

"Oh, I thought you'd gone," he said.

"No indeed! I shall not leave you."

He reached up, and took her hand, and brought it to his forehead, and pressing it down tightly, said:

"There;—now will you keep it there?"

"Yes, I will;" she said.

"And you wont leave me when I get unconscious?"

"No, I will not."

"Honor bright?" he said, with an arch boyish smile, that touched every heart.

"Honor bright;" she replied.

"Well, kiss me, wont you?"

And she bent down and kissed his mouth, while he threw his hand over her neck.

"Thank you;" he said. Then in a low tone he murmured: "O mother, father, Mabel! O God, have mercy on me! Will you—pray for me, Mrs. Stanley?"

"Yes, dear; I do every moment."

"Well then, go ahead!—be quick about it!—Where's that thing with the ether, doctor, give me enough, please;—Good-bye." And he lay passive in the hands of the surgeon, who circled his head with

one arm, while he pressed the ether to his face with the other. And the room was still as the chamber of death. Mrs. Stanley sat at the head of the bed with her hand on Roy's brow, and her face pressed closely to his.

"There;" said the doctor, testing his pulse, "all is eady for the table; now, Mrs. Stanley, you had better leave the room, he will never know the difference. We'll call you before he revives."

"Sir," she replied, "did you hear what he said to me?"

"I did—yes."

"Well, did you understand my promise?"

"Yes, certainly; but it will be very trying."

"Doubtless; but I should expect to be forsaken in my hour of extremity, if I failed to keep that promise. I shall stay,—do not mind me in the least."

So she sat at his head, at the end of the table, to which he was lifted, with her face pressed closely against his cheek, while the terrible work went on. And Mary Mason must have received in her own heart, something sweet and fresh from God, in answer to the prayers that were poured out for Roy, and his mother, and the unknown Mabel, during that sad time. It seemed but a few moments, even to Mrs. Stanley, before she heard:

"All right!—that's splendid work!—Is the bed ready?"

"All ready."

"Now, Mrs. Stanley, please, we'll put him back. Tom, clear everything out of sight, quickly."

She arose and stood with averted face, while they

lifted Roy gently back into bed; and she noticed with a sharp pang how short he was. In a very brief time everything was quiet; the room shaded, and she and Doctor Winters were watching alone by the bedside. The doctor sat with his hand over Roy's heart; and after a few minutes, he said:

"He's coming to splendidly." And in a moment more, Roy struggled slightly—opened his eyes, and lifted his hand to his face.

"Well, how are you, Roy?" asked the doctor.

"All right!—but what is it seems so queer? O yes;" he said, again, as he saw Mrs. Stanley, "I remember. When are you going to do it? They're so cold."

"It's all done sir, and you're to have no more trouble; but are to lie still and get well," said the doctor.

"O yes—and the cork legs," said Roy; "how will they work?"

"Splendid!" said the doctor, cheerily. "A decided improvement you'll find; for, as you intimated, they'll be likely to keep you out of trouble."

"Yes," said Roy, "but it's an awful way to learn."

"That's true," said Dr. Winters; "but you may be thankful you have this chance. Suppose you had fallen the other end on the track? You couldn't have gotten along very well with a cork head, with saw dust for brains. And yet that would be about as good as one filled with brains cooked with alcohol. But now, sir, you must let Mrs. Stanley take care of you; and you sleep, and rest, and eat, and get well. No more talking, now. 'Hush!' is the word. No callers, please, Mrs. Stanley. I'll see you again in a few hours."

CHAPTER XXIX.

IMMEDIATELY after breakfast Willie Briggs went to the Summit House, intending to see the injured man. As he was standing in the office, Mrs. Stanley passed by the door into the dining-hall, and the clerk remarked to a gentleman, standing near:

"That's Mrs. Stanley, the mother of the fellow that was run over last night."

"Stanley?" said Briggs, "evidently I'm on a wrong scent; yet I'll see her, if possible."

In a moment she reappeared, and Briggs gave her a quick, earnest look, and turned away, saying:

"There is a resemblance, but I am mistaken. That is not Roy Mason's mother." And he walked out down the street; but again and again he would say:

"I do wish I knew it was not Roy Mason."

It was almost impossible for him to attend to business, so greatly was he exercised by the uncertainties of the case.

He returned to his hotel, and found letters waiting him; among them, one from Mr. Lawton, in which he referred to Mrs. Mason, saying:

"This anxiety about Roy is killing her; she kept up

amazingly until lately; but a few weeks ago she was taken very sick; has been at death's door, and is still very low. Something must be done to find that boy, for her sake. And it has recently occurred to me that he is afraid to return, or let any one know of his whereabouts, because of the circumstances under which he left. We have not exerted ourselves as we might have done. The press of business has made me selfish, I confess; and then I was so disappointed in the fellow, that I thought perhaps it would be just as well if he never did come back. My wife says that's 'the *man* of it.'

"I have just thought, as you are sent on this prospecting tour, you might find some clue; and if you do, take time to follow it up, and I will make it all right. We must find that boy, or bury his mother, and we cannot afford to do that, in Masonville."

"That's so," said Briggs; "I will follow this up; not much of a clue, but I feel it, somehow. That lady —she is the mother of the young man, they say, yet I will see, and be sure."

He returned to the Summit House, and asked for Mrs. Stanley; and after some moments the word came that she could not be disturbed, unless it were a matter of great importance. Briggs took a card and wrote: "I feel that my mission is very important, and yet I may be intruding, after all. An answer to one question, which you can send by the messenger, will help the matter. If you are the mother of the young man in your charge, I shall not care to intrude farther."

In a few moments the servant returned and asked

him to walk up to Mrs. Stanley's parlor; and in a short time the lady entered from Roy's room.

"I am sure you will pardon a seeming intrusion, madam, when you know why I am come," said Briggs, who was standing in the room when Mrs. Stanley entered.

"No intrusion, sir—Mr. Briggs, I see, by the card. I am not Roy's mother, and yet"—

"Roy, did you say, madam?" asked Briggs, eagerly.

"Yes, that is the name he gave me, sir."

"Roy Mason?" again questioned Briggs.

"He has thus far declined to give the last name, or tell me where his parents, and one whom he calls Mabel, are to be found."

"Mabel?" repeated Briggs; "yes, it must be he; let me see him." And he moved toward the door.

"No, no, Mr. Briggs; be seated, please," said Mrs. Stanley. "You must not be precipitate; we must understand each other first, and upon no account must he be disturbed at present."

Willie Briggs took a seat; a little reluctantly, however, and Mrs. Stanley told him how she found Roy, and of his present condition; that his life depended now upon a healthful reaction of the system from the shock it had received, and that nothing must be allowed to interfere with the most absolute quiet.

"But, she said, "I know that the poor boy is greatly troubled beyond his present affliction, which he does not fully realize. He has spoken your name in his sleep. He often talks in his sleep; and I knew

you therefore by name, and will speak to you as one who has a right. A little while ago I was sitting beside him, out of sight, however; his face was turned away from me; perhaps he was asleep; he murmured, 'Harry, Harry, I'm so sorry.' And in a moment after he said, 'Never to go home—oh, mother.' It almost broke my heart to hear him. I laid my hand on his face to waken him if he were sleeping. He started and looked up: his eyes were wet, and he said, 'Oh, I do want my mother! Sometimes I think you are she.'

"You do resemble her, only that you are tall, and Mrs. Mason is very slight."

"Is that so?" asked Mrs. Stanley, thoughtfully. "Well, I said to Roy, 'Let me send for your mother.'

"'No, no,' he answered quickly, 'promise me you will not. I would rather die;' and I replied, 'I will promise to wait until you bid me do so, unless you wait too long.' Then, as I told you, I was compelled to wait until he should give me the address. Then I reminded him of the fact that I must feel for his mother, inasmuch as I had a son of my own, once. 'Poor mother,' he said, and began to cry. I have only just gotten him quiet by praying and talking with him. And now please tell me the facts. I must not leave him long at a time. His father's address: and who is Mabel? and"—

"His father is dead," said Briggs.

"And Roy doesn't know it?" said Mrs. Stanley.

"No: I presume not. He died of apoplexy, induced by grief at Roy's leaving home. His mother lives at the old home at Masonville. He was her only

child, and she is alone; and it is feared she will die if the boy is not found." And Briggs read from Mr. Lawton's letter, and then continued:

"Mabel is the daughter of their minister, and some say they are engaged. I hardly think that; but they have grown up together, and are like brother and sister. But about Harry: I think I had better tell you the whole story."

"Just a moment, please," said Mrs. Stanley, rising. "I must see Roy first;" and she went to his room. She found him with a strange, excited look in his eyes: he had heard and recognized Briggs' voice, and in his weak condition his fears were easily excited. The remorse that had made him reckless, now stung him to agony. He thought he had at last been discovered by Briggs, who surely had no cause to feel kindly toward him, and now his sin would speedily find him out; and he wished he might have been really killed by the cars, although he shuddered at the thought of death.

Mrs. Stanley noted his worried look; but as he said nothing of this, she had no idea of the suffering he was enduring, nor of its cause; but thought he needed her presence. So she stepped out and excused herself to Mr. Briggs, bidding him come again in a little while, when she might be at liberty to leave the sick-room again.

"I ought to assist you in the care of him, Mrs. Stanley," said Briggs, "and I shall move over from my hotel, and take a room here, to be at your service."

"Yes, that will be well: do so," replied Mrs

Stanley. "We shall really need you: and you have a right, as soon as it is safe, to help care for Roy, although I claim him as my boy now."

Roy was restless. He seemed afraid to sleep, and suspicious of every movement; and when the doctor came, a little later, he looked grave, and said to Mrs Stanley, as they consulted in the parlor:

"Here is a state of things that must not continue, if that boy survives. He is feverish, excited,—he is in trouble."

"I must tell you," said Mrs. Stanley, "that Roy has a friend in the house: one who knows all about him before he left home. Mr. Willie Briggs; see him and learn all, and then advise us. Stay, I will send for him;" and she touched the bell and sent a summons to Briggs, who soon joined them, and was introduced to the doctor.

"And now," said Mrs. Stanley, "tell the doctor all you know about Roy, and he will tell us what to do. I will go back to the room."

At the conclusion of the story, as Briggs gave it to the doctor, he said:

"It is evident to me, then, that Roy supposes he killed his friend. He would not be so troubled from any other cause: and the first thing is for him to know the truth. He cannot recover from this shock in his present state of excitement. Under the circumstances, I think you had better see him: but if you can avoid telling him of his father's death, do so, by all means. I will go in and see him again and return to you."

The doctor went to Roy's room; and as he stood

beside him, and noted the intense expression of his face, and the feverish look in his eye, he was convinced that the course proposed was the safer to pursue, although he feared the result, in any case.

"Roy, my man," he began; "you are a fortunate boy, after all; and your Heavenly Father has not forgotten you."

Roy looked up with a surprised expression into the kind eyes of the doctor, for a moment, and then turned his head on the pillow, with his face to the wall. The doctor continued:

"When you were lying out there on the track, all alone, he sent you help; then he gave you this dear woman; and now another, who knows and loves you, and who has been hunting for you, has come. He was searching for you even while you were lying on that dreadful railroad track; and now he is here, to help take care of you; and the doctor signed to Briggs to enter.

"Yes, I saw him," said Roy, faintly.

"You saw him?—Whom?" said the doctor.

"Willie Briggs; and I was afraid he would find me—and"—

"And what?—Roy, dear old boy," interrupted a familiar voice, and Roy felt an arm passed under his head, as he was clasped in the embrace of his friend, as tender as a brother's. "You surely are not afraid to have Willie Briggs find you?" Roy looked up, and saw the face of his friend, full of tenderness and sympathy, and in a moment all the boyish love that he had felt for this man, from the first day when he came to lay out the route of the railroad, through

his father's farm, welled up in his heart; and with a glad cry like that of a child, he nestled his face on his breast, and sobbed long and deeply.

"Roy," said Briggs, after a moment, in which he wept with the boy, "they'll all be glad to see you back in Masonville. Harry always speaks kindly about you."

"Harry!" interrupted Roy, while a sudden flush mounted his brow.

"Yes, Harry Diffenbaum; you haven't forgot him?"

"No, no, but—I, I—was afraid.—O Willie, isn't it so?"

"No, dear Roy; he was never angry about it a moment; he was hurt badly enough, but he got over it, and wants to find you as badly as any of us. He said it was the drink, not Roy that did it; and it's all been the drink."

"Yes, Willie, it's all been the drink; but oh, my God, dear God, how I thank you! You've been good to me." And Roy closed his eyes, while a look of unutterable gladness trembled on his face.

"O Willie!" he said, after a moment, "how I scorned you that night on the island; can you forgive me?"

"A thousand times, Roy, yes. Never think of it again. It did me good, Roy. It sent me to God, as I never went before, and I've conquered my old enemy ever since that night."

"And my mother, Willie. Have you seen her? And Mabel?" he added, in a whisper.

"Yes, I have seen them both, just once, at a temperance meeting."

"And my father?"

"No, I have not seen him. I have been to Masonville but few times since the time I saw you on the island."

"Did my mother seem?—did she look as if?—sort of troubled—and"— And Roy hid his face again against the breast of his friend.

"Roy," said Willie, knowing what was back of this broken sentence, "you remember how you lived at home with your mother. She could not get along without her boy, very well."

"No," sighed Roy, "and I tell you, Will, oh, it's been awful!—and I—oh, I want my mother—now—I must have my mother. Say, doctor, when can I go home?" and he lifted his head, and with a new lustre in his eye, looked up into the tear-stained faces before him.

"That depends on how fast you get well, my boy," replied the doctor; "on how much you sleep, and how happy you are, and how fully you put yourself in the hands of your Heavenly Father, and trust Him. But now, I think it will not take many weeks for you to get so you can be moved, if you will be good."

"Oh, I am so glad! I feel so different here;" and Roy laid his hand on his breast, and closed his eyes, while a happy, tremulous smile played about his lips.

"You've carried a heavy load, Roy," said the doctor, in a husky tone.

"O yes, I didn't know how heavy till now it's gone; but I can wait now and be patient till I get well. Oh, I will be a good boy from this time; but I've been

very bad, and I got my pay. Dear Mrs. Stanley wont you pray for me, please, right now; pray God to forgive my sins for Christ's sake; pray that I may get well, and be good, and pray for my mother;" and again Roy broke down, utterly; and during the prayer, in which all joined, kneeling beside his bed, his sobs gave a mournful emphasis to the petition.

When the prayer was finished, Roy still remained with closed eyes. His sobbing grew into gentle sighs, and there came an expression of peace, such as he had not worn since the days of his innocent boyhood.

Mrs. Stanley bent over him, and kissed him, softly; he acknowledged this by a quiet smile, and happy look, and a touch of his hand on her cheek, and then wearily closing his eyes, he seemed that he would sleep; and Mrs. Stanley and the doctor silently withdrew to the parlor, while Willie Briggs still knelt beside the bed, with Roy's hand clasped in his. And when Mrs. Stanley returned, some time after, she found the position unchanged. Roy had fallen into a sweet, dreamless sleep, like that of innocent weariness. Willie Briggs would not make any change of position, that might break the healing charm. And thus the late afternoon slipped down into the evening.

Once Roy turned his head on the pillow, with a deep sigh of contentment, and furnished Briggs an opportunity to release his arm, and arise; and from that time, during the night, as they watched beside him, he rested like an infant. Briggs, after a while, wished that Mrs. Stanley should retire; and he was left alone in charge until morning, excepting as the

doctor came and spent an hour. The next morning Roy was bright and cheerful; and after his breakfast, Briggs spoke again about writing to his mother. He said, "Roy, your mother has no idea where you are—she doesn't know you are alive."

"No, poor mother," said Roy. "But I'm going home soon. Oh, I'll be so glad."

"Shall I write and tell your mother you are coming?"

"Yes: and tell my father to come and carry me in his arms, as he used to do, for I can't walk."

This was a surprise to Briggs; and before he had time to prepare for it, Roy had detected the look of consternation which came to his face at the mention of his father, and he exclaimed,—

"There's something you haven't told me, Will. What is it? It's about my father!"

Willie remained silent. He dared not speak; but a look at Roy's face revealed the fact that he must tell him all at once. So he broke the news of his father's death tenderly as possible; but at the best it fell with crushing force upon the heart of the boy. For days thereafter there was great cause to fear the result; and but for that one night of perfect rest, with its recuperative power, the end of the world would have come to Roy Mason.

CHAPTER XXX.

MARY MASON was lying on the couch in her room. The window shades were drawn, and the house was very still. It was always still these days. Mabel sat beside her, often dipping the white linen napkin which lay upon her forehead, into a bowl of ice water, on the stand near by.

"Have you any idea how the election is going?" asked the sufferer, in a feeble tone.

"Oh, we hoped you would not remember the day," said Mabel; "but I haven't heard anything. I hope you won't worry about it, dear Mrs. Mason; we tried to keep it from you."

"How could it be kept from me? I could never forget. I wish I knew how it was going."

"Well, you've done your part, as Mrs. Windham said, and now if the men will but do theirs, it will be all right."

"How will your father vote?" whispered Mrs. Mason.

"O dear Mrs. Mason! don't ask me. Do you know I feel almost desperate to think he will support the license ticket. Father is too good a man to make

such a mistake as this, and with the boys going as they are."

"What does he say about it?"

"Nothing to me: for he was not pleased because I went back into the Union after Mr. Marsden got him to compel me to leave that time. I told papa that it was a matter of conscience with me; so he says no more, but there is something between him and me that hurts me."

"Well, dear child, rum hurts wherever it comes in.—O Roy!—my God, how long?"

Mabel's only reply to this cry, was the laying of her face beside that of the sufferer on the pillow; and in this position Mrs. Windham found them some time after, as she entered the room without any signal, for the women of the W. C. T. U. had learned the way to Mary Mason's room during the weeks she had been a prisoner.

"What about the election?" was Mary Mason's salutation to Faith Windham.

"My husband thinks the prospect is good: I was afraid you would 'snuff the battle.'"

"Yes, I have kept track of the day. Oh, we must win! But my whole heart trembles with fear, yet. 'What time I am afraid, I will trust in the Lord.'"

"Monroe is terribly excited," said Mrs. Windham, "working for their candidate with all his might, and Jimmie with him. Harry is standing at the polls in their ward, so Mr. Windham told me, with his hands full of temperance tickets, and his father moving about in a semi-conscious state; but he is proud of

Harry, anybody can see that, and glad he is on the temperance side."

"I saw Mr. Monroe the other day," said Mabel, "and I thought he looked dreadfully."

"Yes, he has changed very much," said Mrs. Windham. "He is drinking harder than ever, and every man who votes for license to-day, votes to help that man to ruin, and prevent the answer of his mother's prayers."

Mabel's face grew pale, but she did not reply, for she felt the words to be true; and yet she knew her father would be one of those men.

"Well," said Mrs. Windham, rising, "as you know as much as you do about what 's going on, Mrs. Mason, and share in the anxiety, I will go down now and tell Mr. Windham to bring us word as soon as anything is certainly known, and then I will return."

"Let me go, Mrs. Windham," cried Mabel. "You stay—you have but just come up the hill, and must be tired. I will run home a minute and see mother."

"Very well, do so;" said Mrs. Windham, removing her hat and shawl; remarking, as she hung them on a hook, "it's a beautiful day: warm as summer: how we long to see you out again, dear Mrs. Mason."

Mary Mason made no reply, but turned her face away, while a deep sigh escaped her, and Mrs. Windham understood her.

"Poor dear heart," she said, sitting on the bedside, "there is no rest but in Christ and his kingdom. Dear Lord, thy kingdom come to us here, in Masonville, and bring us peace; thy will be done, and bring

us love, and deliver us from this evil of rum.—Don't fret, dear."

"I am not really fretting, dear Faith," said Mary Mason, softly, "but I am just tired out. I've waited so long, you know; my soul is at peace, but I cannot compel my poor body to get about any longer; there is such a lack in my home, you must know."—

"Indeed I know; and Christ knows; and he cares about it; and I do believe he will make you glad, somehow, for all the years wherein you have known sorrow. And now I'm going to tell you something which will make you very glad. It happened just after you were first taken sick, and yet you haven't been able since to be talked to. I did not expect to do this to-day, for we were trying to keep all this temperance business away from you.

"One morning, quite early, not later than nine o'clock, Harry Diffenbaum came to our house, and asked to see my husband and me; so I took him to the study, where Mr. Windham was already at work, and as soon as he had said good morning, he began in his quick, bright way:

"'I must beg you to excuse this early call, and also the fact that I am in a hurry; but my business is important, at least to me. You remember, Mrs. Windham,' he said, 'when you and Mrs. Mason came to our place with the pledge and petition. I signed Mrs. Mason's paper, but I couldn't sign your pledge. I told you the reason. Well, that reason no longer exists, and I am come to sign it this morning.'

"Of course we were delighted. I got out the pledges, for I did happen to have some by me, and

he wrote his name in a bold hand. 'And now,' I said 'tell us how it happens, that you can do to-day what you could not then.'

"He hesitated a moment, and then said: 'I will tell you. It is in some respects a painful subject, yet it has a good ending; and I would like you to know and appreciate my mother. She has always been opposed to the saloon; but she was devotedly attached to my father, and she had a consciousness about her duty as a wife, that would not allow her to leave him; and she determined to save him; and resolved that I should be made superior to the temptation of drink if possible. She has strong faith in God. The first things I remember are her teaching me about the sin of the liquor traffic. She used to read to me, and make me learn what the Bible said about it, and she made me promise that, come what would, I would never drink liquor. She taught me that I only was the keeper of my own mouth, and could control what went into it, and came out, if I couldn't do any more. And although I have been brought up just outside of a whiskey barrel, I don't know the taste of liquor. It was a great grief to my mother when father compelled me to go into the saloon. I had to do it, or leave. I determined I would not sell liquor. I had to handle it, and keep the books, but I have managed to avoid the selling, mostly. I had to do it a few times when father was in and bade me do it, but I never did it when I was left alone. Father, of course, claimed a legal right to me until I was twenty-one, and would not listen to me. But yesterday was my birth-day—I was of age. Mother had waited

twenty-one years for that day.' And Harry was choked so he could not go on; but after waiting a moment, said: 'Last night, after supper, father expected me to go down to the saloon, as usual, but I said: 'No, father, we'll not keep it open to-night, but spend the evening at home with mother, and I want to have a talk with you. I told him I had a good place waiting for me the day I was of age, but if he would let me dispose of the liquors, and clean out the place, and put in groceries, I would stay with him; if not, I would have to go, and take mother. Well, we had a time. We talked until past midnight; father tried to make me see that I would make myself a rich man, if I would go into the liquor business, as I do not drink myself. I told him I wouldn't have money made that way; and when he found I could not be moved, and really came to realize that I am my own man, and that I could legally go away if I chose, and perhaps persuade mother to go too, he surrendered; and mother and I went over to the place, late as it was, and poured out the liquors, every bottle and keg. It's all gone into the river, and to-day I start to the city. I wanted to sign that pledge first, though.'

"I can't tell you," continued Mrs. Windham, "how that boy looked to me, and how I regard his mother. I felt like taking off my hat to her, every time I've seen her since. But that isn't all. Before Harry left, he said: 'Now I want you to pray with me, and for my father. We hoped, mother and I, when the temperance wave struck us, it would bring something that would help us out. Oh, its been hard work waiting to be twenty-one; but it's over now; and I do

want you to express thanks to God for me.' We knelt and prayed for him, and his father and mother, and I think I have never seen Mr. Windham so moved. When we arose from our knees, Harry said, 'Now I think I can be a Christian. I've wanted to be all the time, but I didn't dare say anything about it until I was twenty-one.'

"I should like to know what the dear boy has been all this time. I don't know but I am wrong, but somehow I have felt that he has been putting many of us to shame.

"Harry said one thing more;—he said, that once, when Mr. Windham read the story of Naaman the leper, one Sunday morning, for his scripture lesson, he felt that the part about Naaman and the king's god, Rimmon, was just for him, and had given him great comfort ever since.

"Well, Harry went to the city; bought groceries, and put them into the old place, which was thoroughly renovated; and then the temperance women gave him a reception. I think nearly every lady in the town went down that day and bought something. Harry was the happiest boy I ever saw; while his father tried to keep himself occupied in the rear of the store. I went, however, and shook hands with him; and congratulated him on the change. The very next Sunday, Harry joined our church, with his mother; and to-day he is working for temperance, with all his might.

"Now, isn't that splendid, Mary Mason?" cried Mrs. Windham, kissing her on both cheeks.

"Yes, yes indeed! I am very glad," said Mrs

Mason, in a low tone. "That is the way it should be; the home stronger than vice. I am rejoiced for Harry and his mother. Harry has always been a favorite with me; he had such a good, noble face, I could but love him. But, dear Faith, why should I have been so foolish, while Mrs. Diffenbaum was so wise? I ruined my house in spite of the best possible chance to have saved it, while she saved hers, in spite of a combination of adverse influences, that it seems must have ruined it anyhow. I wish I could see Harry; God bless him! But will you pray for me? My heart needs it. Oh, my boy!"

Mrs. Windham wondered she had not thought how this would affect Mary Mason; and it was with a profound sense of need, that she bowed by the bedside, and prayed, as many times before, for Mary Mason and her boy.

While Faith Windham was at prayer, Mabel returned, accompanied by her mother. Both were excited; and there was a strange light in Mabel's eyes, and color in her cheeks, which were wet with tears, that were still dripping from her lashes. She held a letter in her hand.

They both stood with bowed heads until the prayer was finished; then Mabel signalled to Mrs. Windham to come to her; and Mrs. Brayton went to the sick-room.

Mabel led the way to the parlor, and closed the doors carefully after them. As soon as they were alone, she exclaimed:

"Oh, Mrs. Windham, read that!" and she placed the letter in her hand; and dropped on her knees and hid her face in the lap of her friend.

The letter was from Willie Briggs, telling all the glad, yet sorrowful news about Roy.

As Mrs. Windham read, she reached down, and drew the sobbing girl closer and closer, until she had lifted her to her lap, with her head resting on her shoulder, and she held her thus, with a tight clasp, as if to keep he throbbing heart that made the slight frame quiver, from breaking.

"Well, thank God anyhow that the boy is found;" said Mrs. Windham, as she finished the letter. "But oh, it is dreadful;—dear child!" and she stroked the bowed head. "But how shall we tell his poor mother,—and what shall we tell her?"

"That's what kills me," sobbed Mabel. "Yet it will be a thousand times better than never to have him again at all. But I don't think we had better tell her about his poor legs;—that's what mamma thought; but she thought we must wait for you to help us decide. But do you know, I am dreadfully afraid it will kill her, anyhow, she is so worn out."

"No; I think it will bring her up, give her something to live and work for yet many years," said Faith Windham. "But as you say, I think we had better just tell her, to-night, that Roy is found and is coming home. Hark! what's that? Some one is coming in. Don't suppose they're here already?—or does any one else know of this?"

"No one but mother." And Mabel sprang to the door, for she heard quick voices within, and the air without, seemed full of sound.

They found Mary Mason sitting erect in the bed, while Harry Diffenbaum and Mr. Windham were

relating how the city election had been carried for temperance.

There was joy in Mary Mason's face, that had not been seen there for years; and Mrs. Windham thought "this will prepare the way for a deeper joy and an added sorrow."

The entire temperance ticket had been elected, and Masonville was wild with rejoicing.

The gentlemen hastened back; the ladies had followed them to the door, and stood together a moment, with the heavy secret between them. In a few words it was decided that Mrs. Windham should break the news, that Roy was found, to Mrs. Mason; and they returned together to the room—Mabel having again retreated to the parlor.

Mary Mason had dropped back upon the pillow, but looked up as they entered her room, with joy flooding her face.

"Oh, how I thank God!" she said, "that he has let me live to see this day."

"Yes, it is a glad day, dear Mrs. Mason," said Mrs. Windham; "and the Lord has more joy in store for you, than you know. We have heard from"—and she paused to give Mary Mason an opportunity to bring her thoughts out over this line of hope. She was looking into her eyes and waiting for her to proceed; but no movement of her face indicated, for a full moment, that she had a clue to the truth. Then, as Mrs. Windham dropped on her knees beside the bed, and was about to speak again, she seemed to see the unuttered word, and said, under her breath, with a quick gasp:

"Roy?"

"Yes, we have heard from Roy;" replied Faith Windham.

And still Mary Mason looked at her, waiting. She lifted her hand to her head, passed it across her brow, and letting it fall again heavily, said:

"Well, tell me the rest. I think I can bear it."

"He did not write himself, Willie Briggs wrote."

"Yes, Willie Briggs found my Roy. Well?"—

"Roy is sick."

"Oh"—

"He has been hurt, by a railroad train,—but he is better."

"Oh—then he is not dead? You looked so sad, I thought he must be dead;" and again she lifted her hand to her head, as if to assist her thought. Mrs. Windham went on:

"No, he lives, and is coming home."

"When?" And she arose in bed, and began gathering up her hair that fell over her hand like a drift of snow, and twisted it into a coil.

"Oh, not to-night, dear," said Mrs. Windham. "It will be several days before he will be able. You will have time to get strength, and get all things nicely ready; there will be many things to do."

"Yes; there will be a great deal to do. I wonder if his room is in order?"

"We'll see about that to-morrow," said Mrs. Brayton, speaking for the first time. "Yes, Mabel," she added, reaching out her hand; and Mabel came in, and was gathered to the heart of Roy's mother; and her tears fell on her face. Then tears came to Mary Mason, and they all wept together with chastened joy

CHAPTER XXXI.

"HOW did you come to do all this for me, Mrs. Stanley?"

It was a beautiful Sabbath afternoon, many weeks after Roy's injury. He was propped up with pillows; and his couch was moved out in such a position, that he could look out on the street and off into the town. The room was bright, and filled with the fragrance of flowers, that stood in baskets and vases, gifts to the boy from many tender hearts, that had come to feel somewhat of his burden, and were thus trying to lighten it. Mrs. Stanley sat beside him, holding one of his hands, while books, and letters from Mabel and Mary Mason, and other Masonville friends, were lying on the stand near by. The open Bible was on the bed, at Roy's side, and Mrs. Stanley's glasses were on the page. She had been reading over all the letters, and from the word of God, and now had been talking to Roy; and her face wore a sweetly tender expression, as she looked at the object before her, grown so dear during these weeks of watching. The long period of suffering and confinement; the abstinence from wine, and the pure and hallowed associations of his sick-room, had worked a

transformation in the face of Roy Mason. The bloated, beastial expression of the tramp had passed utterly, and there had come back the noble beauty of his innocent years, to which had been added a subdued and refined expression; and a spirituality that was a token of the time when all things should become new, sat like a crown upon his broad white forehead, and burned in the depths of the large dark eyes, that would now and then grow misty as he talked over the past. Roy looked more like his mother than he had ever done before these days; and Mrs. Stanley thought she had never seen but one face lovelier or dearer.

Mrs. Stanley, assisted by Dr. Winters and Willie Briggs, had fought death for this boy's life, and had won; at least, were holding him at bay, for a season; and to see the light of life in his eye, its tint coming back to his cheek, and its tone in his voice, was to her a joy that compensated richly for all the cost of watching, weariness and anxiety of those days; and which were like balsam to the old wounds of her heart.

"You ask me, Roy, how I came to do all this for you," she said, covering the white hand that lay on the counterpane with her own, caressing it with a gentle touch. "I will tell you: and I want you never to forget. I told you that I had a boy. He must have been born two or three years before you were; he was about your age, probably, when I saw him last. He was a good boy, a loving, true-hearted boy as ever a mother had, and we were very happy together for a few years. But by means which I did not under-

stand until it was too late, he formed a love for drink. My husband kept his wine always, and we used it daily ; and before we dreamed of the truth concerning this evil, our boy was a drunkard. We remonstrated and tried to save Frank. We banished the wine from our home ; but in the midst of this anxiety my husband died, and Frank and I were left alone. I gave my life to the work of trying to help him to form new habits, and new associations. He tried. He saw how my heart was breaking with sorrow over him, and because of my own wicked ignorance, and he tried ; but he seemed too weak to succeed. He would be sober sometimes for weeks, and then would fall, and be worse than ever. This was the case until his self-respect was entirely gone, and he said one day to me : 'Mother, it's no use for me to try to be a sober man. This passion for drink is too strong for my best effort. If I fail like this when I am young, how will it be when I am old ? Let me go ; give me up. I must die of it sooner or later, under circumstances of more or less shame. Let me go away out of your sight, and end it all ; not by actual suicide, I don't mean, but in the regular way of the drunkard.'

" I was shocked beyond measure by such a proposition. I clung to him. I told him I was to blame it was I that had given him the cup, from his babyhood, and I plead with him to stay with me, and let me save him, or I should die of despair as well as grief.

" He answered me : 'Well, I will make one more effort ; help me all you can ; lock me up, do anything desperate with me I will do all I can. If we suc-

ceed we may be happy yet; but if we fail I shall leave you, go off among strangers, where you will never find me to know how it ends.'

"There was a fearfully desperate earnestness in these words, and in his look; but I could not believe this dreadful prophecy of ruin and death would ever come to pass in my son. I cannot now; I hope against all reason for hope.

"My Frank had an intimate friend, a young man about his own age, whom my husband had befriended; and who, I think, constituted himself a sort of guardian of my boy from a sense of genuine gratitude. He was a devoted Christian, a young man of solid principles, and independent strength of character. He never drank, or tampered with vice in any form. The two boys were devoted to each other from the first, and this attachment grew as Frank's need of such a friend grew. George told me, one day, as we were talking about Frank—for we made a confidant of him—that my boy had made the same statement to him; and he said: 'Mrs. Stanley, if Frank ever does fall again, he will do this thing; but he shall not get away from me. I shall follow him for your sake, and that of Mr. Stanley;' but, as I said, I never thought it could come to pass.

"Oh, how we prayed those days, and Frank prayed for himself, and I certainly thought he would be able to stand; and as weeks and months passed, and he came home all right every evening, I began to feel in a measure secure; but yet, I waited every day for the hour when he would be safe in his own room with unutterable anxiety.

"I must not tire you, Roy, with a long story, but I want you to know about it, although the end is too sorrowful for me to tell. I can only say, that one night, after nearly a year of sobriety, he came home drunk again, and was angry at my sorrow, he struck me, and then left the house. He does not look like a boy that could strike his mother. I have a good likeness, which I will show you, by-and-by; but Roy, I have never seen him since. I got one little note from him, mailed on a train, in which he told me he had just simply kept his promise. He thanked God, he said, that there was one promise he could keep. If he could not keep the pledge to let drink alone, he could keep the one to go away and die. He said:

"'I struck you once with my naked hand—the next time it might be with a deadly weapon. I dare not stay; make no effort to follow me or find me; it will be fruitless. If I should know I were to meet you face to face again, I should take my own life; so desperate have I become. I have with me one friend, whom I cannot leave behind; there is no way for me to get rid of him, but to kill him. I do not want to do this; but I may, when I get drunk again. God knows; and I hope he will keep me from that. If George will follow me, and see the end, he can; only I have made him solemnly promise, that he will never communicate to you, unless it should happen, that I do really lose my old self utterly in the gutter, and find a new man, who can take the place of your son. Until this happens, you will know nothing more of one who is too worthless and unworthy to be known as your son. I shall drop my name, and from this

day your son, Frank Stanley, is dead to you, and the world that has known him. If I had the grit, I would take my life,' he added, in a postscript. This is all I know; and it was to ease my heart a little, that I took this trip. I suppose he went West. And I had thought possible that I might find him; yet I had but little hope. I could never pass a young man in trouble. So I found you, and took you in as I did. No;—rather my heart was so empty, that you crept into it naturally, that night as you lay there so helpless, and hopeless,—a waif. I thought, as they said you were alone, with no one to look after you, I had a right to you; and so I took you for Frank's sake, and for Christ's. And now, although you are going home so soon, I shall keep you for your own sake."

"Mrs. Stanley had told this story with perfect calmness; but with a strange pallor, and a drawn look to her face, that was more terrible to see than tears.

"Do you wonder," she continued, "that I could not give you wine, although you cried for it as you did?"

"Did I do that?" asked Roy, suddenly.

"Yes; when you were so weak, that you did not know what you did; and you thought I was cruel because I would not let you have it."

"I know," said Roy; "I have wanted it awfully sometimes, and I know I thought my mother would give it to me when I got home."

"Dear Roy, shall you ever drink it again?" asked Mrs. Stanley, with a deep inflection of sorrow.

"I hope not," replied Roy; "and yet, I shouldn't

want to promise. For even as you've been talking about it, I've felt my mouth burn at the thought. I should be afraid to promise; besides, I once said I never would make such a promise."

"What's that you promised not to promise, old boy?" asked Willie Briggs, who had just arisen from his daytime sleep, and come into the room.

"Don't you remember the day, Willie, that Sunday afternoon when you first began to talk to me, and I told you I would never sign a pledge? And I told Mrs. Stanley I should be afraid to promise, for fear I couldn't keep it; especially after I get home."

"But you know you will find no wine in your mother's home, Roy; her letters tell you about the great change," said Mrs. Stanley.

"Yes;" said Roy, slowly. "But if it had only all been done before I was born, I might make such a promise, and keep it. I'm too much like your boy, I'm afraid, Mrs. Stanley. It seems to me the old sideboard would make me want wine, even if there was only cold water on it."

"But," said Willie Briggs, "you cannot forget, Roy, that the last act of your father's life was to cleanse the old house of temptation, for your coming home. He did not know it would be so long. It has waited a good while."

"Yes; I'm glad to know that about father; but as I said, a moment ago, if it had been done before, I might have two good legs now." And there was a flavor of bitterness in his tone.

Willie Briggs continued:

"And your mother has done a grand work for

Masonville, before she broke down entirely. She is president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and when I saw her and Mabel last, they both wore the little white riband, as Mrs. Stanley does."

"Is that what that means?" asked Roy, reaching out his hand feebly, and touching the little badge. "I've wondered what it meant."

"Yes;" said Mrs. Stanley. "This little white riband means purity from drink, or anything that can defile our homes; and no woman who wears this will have wine in her house. But Roy, dear, I am concerned about this matter. Oh, as I have been watching you up out of the shadow of death, I have prayed that you might live for God, and your mother. I could not bear that you should live to ever drink again."

Roy looked into her face, and saw tears on her cheeks; and turning to Willie Briggs, he read deep and anxious love written in the look he bent above him; and he silently reached a hand to each.

"Dear Roy," continued Mrs. Stanley, "I have prayed that you might be a Christian."

"I would promise," said Roy, not noticing this remark, "that I would never drink again, if I was sure I could always keep it; but I've promised myself so many times, that I would never touch a thing stronger than the little glass of wine, and broke it over and over. I did that all the time out on that dreadful journey from home, to—here."

"You can never let strong drink alone, if you touch wine," said Willie Briggs, "or cider either. You must let the whole thing alone entirely, not look at it,

or anything else that can make you crave drink. It's no easy thing, Roy, to become a sober man. I know about it."

"Yes; I know, Willie,—I can't forget that," said Roy.

"And you've got a life work on your hands; and dear Roy, it is a work you cannot do unless you have the power of God with you—his Spirit in you. Oh, Roy!—I've wanted to tell you how I have been praying that you may be led to Christ, as I have. None but Christ can save us, Roy, but he can. He has saved me, and he can you."

"But," said Roy, "it's all a muddle to me about being a Christian. I've thought about it since I've been lying here. I've thought of what the drink has done; and then, how my mother gave me the wine; and you know how she prayed always."

"Yes, I know," said Willie Briggs.

"And how Mr. Brayton preached, and drank wine, and how Mr. Monroe's wine, just the same that he sold in the saloon, was used in the church at communion, and called the blood of Christ. And when I thought about all these things, I've wondered if it does any good after all to pray, and preach, and think of Christ. It's all dark to me there, and it makes me tired, and discouraged, to think about it."

"But Roy, dear," said Mrs. Stanley, "you know how your mother wrote that she could see how God had been answering her prayers in all that has passed, and teaching her, and leading her to the light and the truth, and away from the great evil: and you know that you owe your life to the kind

providence of God; and the fact that you are soon to go home is because of his love."

"Yes, I know that," said Roy. "And I do know that I ought to be a good Christian; but—

"But what, dear?" asked Mrs. Stanley.

"Oh, I wish you would sing to me," sighed Roy, wearily.

"What shall I sing?"

"My mother's hymn again," said Roy, nestling down on his pillow and closing his eyes, adding, "I'll hear her sing it in a little while."

"Yes, dear, I trust you will," replied Mrs. Stanley, and began to sing:

> "Nearer, my God, to thee,
> E'en though it be a cross
> That raiseth me."

"Sing that again," interrupted Roy, lifting his eyes suddenly to her face. She began the verse, and sang it once more.

"Now I know what that means," Roy interrupted again.

> "'E'en though it be a cross
> That raiseth me.'

"It means just this,"—and Roy pointed down to the place in the bed where was marked on the outside the pitiful limit of his length.

"I guess it had to be that, for mother and me"—

"Will you let it lift you, Roy, to God?" asked Mrs. Stanley, bending over him.

"I hope it may," he replied.

"Will you give yourself all to the power that can

lift you? Give yourself to Jesus and his cross, and let him save you this blessed afternoon?"

"Oh, I have been so wicked, Mrs. Stanley," he said. "It will take more 'n one day to save me, I fear!" And he sighed wearily, as though he were too weak to think of such an undertaking.

"But it will only take you a moment to consent that he may begin the work; and you don't know how fast the Spirit of God can work. He that worked out the redemption plan in three years, don't you think he can save you without waiting very long?"

"I wouldn't refuse to let him save me," said Roy; "but now it seems a mean thing to ask of him. I've used up the two good legs he gave me by sin; and now to come to him when I'm weak, and helpless, and couldn't run away if I should try; it seems mean. I've thought of that too, all these days that I've been lying here. I used to think I would be a Christian some time, when I had had my fun, and got old enough to settle down.—And now—

"One thing keeps coming to me, and makes me feel as if I ought to die, anyhow. My mother used to say so often, 'I must not be disappointed about getting a man out of my boy;' and then to think I've been and disappointed her, after all. I intended to be a good boy, a great man. I was proud of my strength, too; proud because I could do so many things the other boys couldn't; and now—but say, Mrs. Stanley, do you think the Lord will lay all this up against me? For you see I really didn't know 'till you told me that it was the wine that was doing it all. Do you think I would have done it if I had

known? No indeed!" And Roy feebly clinched his white fist. "And I couldn't think why it was I kept getting wicked, and going wrong, when I did want to be good and true. Will He lay it up against me?"

"Our Heavenly Father never lays anything up against us," said Mrs. Stanley. "He is all the time trying to save us from wrong doing and sin. He is trying to teach us: but we are so slow to learn. We have all been very slow to learn about the poison of alcohol, that lurks in the wine and cider, that seem so harmless. And he knows better than any one, how you were made a slave by this demon, before you were old enough to know; and he has taken the means to save you at last, in spite of all. He has taken the means to answer your poor mother's prayers, in spite of the serpent she nourished in her home."

"Do you think God made me fall on the track for that purpose? Couldn't there have been some other way for God?" asked Roy.

"God did not make you fall on the track, my dear Roy. It was the drink that did that."

"Yes: but did God let me do it then, that he might save me?"

"No: he did not even let you do it. Drink did it, in spite of God, and his will to keep you safe. You were going to ruin in spite of his love. God had nothing to do with that part of it. We get into trouble in the place where we will not let God take hold of us. We always fail at the point where God is not comprehended in our life and plan. God's part is to come to your help though, when you get to

the place where, as you said, you could not run away. When you got into a quiet place where he could make you hear, he spake to you: and makes use of the very means by which the demon intended to destroy you, to show you the way to be saved. He had to get your attention first. He could not do that while you were in love with the world: satisfied with yourself, and in the power of the wine demon, and would not listen to the truth against him. But now you've heard the voice of God. Is not that so, Roy ?"

"Yes;" came the answer, very softly spoken.

"What does he say to you ?"

"To give myself to him, and never drink again;" he replied, while the muscles of his mouth quivered.

"What will you reply to him, dear Roy?"

Roy lay with his eyes closed several moments, while Mrs. Stanley, and Willie Briggs, each held a hand, and silently prayed for him. At length he looked up into their faces, and replied, with deeply solemn earnestness:

"I will answer him. Yes, I will give myself to him, the best I know how."

"Thank God!" said Willie Briggs, bowing his face upon the hand he held.

Mrs. Stanley continued:

"Well then, dear, whose are you, if you give yourself to Christ ?"

"I must be his."

"Thank God!" said Willie Briggs, again.

"Yes; you must be his," said Mrs. Stanley. "His very own; for you did belong to him, all the time you

were running away. You were his own boy then; the boy that Christ had redeemed; whose ransom price he had paid with his own life. And now that you consent to be his, there can be no question about whose you are. It has never been a question about whether you are God's son, or not; but whether you would be his obedient son, or a prodigal; do you see?"

"Yes; I think I do," said Roy. "And when I am willing to be obedient, that makes it all right between him and me; because Christ paid all the rest."

"Yes, that is it;" replied Mrs. Stanley. "And now you are willing to be obedient?"

"I am;" replied Roy, earnestly. "Anything he will let me know about, I will do; anywhere he will lead me, I will go."

Mrs. Stanley turned the leaves of the Bible that was lying on the bed, to the eighth chapter of Romans, and placing her finger on the fourteenth verse, she held the book in position for Roy to see, and he read:

"'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again, to fear; but the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father. The Spirit itself, beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.'"

Roy looked up as he finished reading, with a question in his eye.

"What is it, dear Roy?" asked Mrs. Stanley.

"Can that mean me,—Roy Mason?" he asked.

"Look again; of whom is it spoken?" And she held the book before him.

"Of them that are led by the Spirit of God," said Roy.

"Does that mean you,—Roy Mason?"

"Yes; I want him to lead me."

"Then who shall hinder him, if you are obedient to him?"

"Nothing shall hinder, nothing—nothing!" said Roy, with a rising inflection, and emphatic tone. "Oh, I see it. I know what it means now. If I am his, and willingly obey him, there can be nothing between us, but the love of Jesus, and the blood of the atonement, which covers all my sin. Oh, I will follow him, and he will take care of all that I have been afraid of."

"Yes; and you need not even fear the wine, or your love for it;" said Mrs. Stanley, "for he will keep you."

"No, no, oh, dear Christ!" exclaimed Roy. "I thank thee for this hope of salvation! I may be saved, after all."

"When?" asked Willie Briggs.

"When?" repeated Roy. "Why, when I am ready. I am ready now— now I may be. I do believe I am saved! Willie, Willie Briggs, I am saved! I know I am. Dear Mrs. Stanley, I do belong to Jesus! He will take care of his own. Oh, write to my mother, and tell her that my sins are all forgiven."

It was a face radiant with unspeakable joy, that looked up from Roy's pillow that afternoon, and filled the sick-room with something of the glory of heaven. It was a Sabbath never to be forgotten by any of those who entered into the sacred quiet of its hallowed gladness. The remainder of the day was passed in restful praise; and Willie Briggs wrote to Mary Mason, the letter that was to bring her more of comfort than she had known in all the days of her sorrow. This letter not only told of his surrender to Christ, and of the deep joy of salvation that overflowed from his soul, but it closed with these words:

"In another week, Dr. Winters thinks we can bring him home."

While Willie Briggs was sitting in Roy's room and writing, Mrs. Stanley slept awhile, and returning from her room, she brought an album; and opening it, she held it before Roy, saying:

"That was my boy."

Roy and Willie both looked at it, and then at each other.

"That face is familiar to me," said Briggs.

"Yes, indeed," said Roy. "You have seen him."

Mrs. Stanley said nothing, but her hand trembled so, that Willie took the book from her, and seated her in a chair beside the bed; and then he stood looking long at the photograph.

"Yes," he said again, "I know that face; there can be no mistake, I am sure."

"Where?" began Mrs. Stanley.

"In Masonville," said Briggs.

"In Masonville?" And she looked at Roy.

"Yes," said Roy, "he was there; I knew him."

"What—was he?—how? Was he Frank Stanley?"

"No; but Frank Benton. I have spoken very positively," added Roy. "Yet we may both be mistaken; but the likeness is very strong. He had not been there so very long, when I went away."

She sat silent for some time, with the picture before her. By-and-bye she asked, just above her breath:

"Have you anything to say?—have you nothing to tell me, to make me,—that is, that would make Frank Benton's mother glad?"

Roy answered only with gathering tears, which she leaned forward and wiped away; and then rising, she kissed him, and taking the album, went back to her own room.

She said nothing more about it, but from that day was in feverish haste to take Roy home.

CHAPTER XXXII.

LETTERS came to Roy every day; long ones from Mabel, and little short scrawls from his mother, written with pencil, faintly traced, but precious to the boy, whose hungry heart dwelt on every line, and dot, and word, and counted them more than his bread. Mabel said in one letter: "Your mother is still very weak from her long illness, but is gaining; and when she has you back she will get well fast. And oh, how we all want you back! We can hardly wait for the day." There came now and then a letter from Harry; and in one, he said: "I should come to help you home, if Briggs had not assured me there is no need But I shall be on hand to take you from the train when you come, and you needn't mind it, dear old fellow, if you can't walk."

No letters came from the ship's company, and Mabel did not mention her brothers, and only once referred to the "Gazelle," which she said was used by Jimmie Monroe for pleasure parties, and that after the election, it was fitted with a bar for liquors, and anchored in the river, to be out of the way of the law. Roy felt a pang go through his very soul, as he

thought of his beloved engine being used in such service; for Mabel and Harry had informed him fully of the temperance war, and its victories and defeats. Mr. and Mrs. Windham had both written earnestly, lovingly; and Roy began to feel that he was not an alien, after all, and looked forward with joy to the day of his return.

Frequent letters passed between Mary Mason and Mrs. Stanley; and Willie Briggs wrote to her, or Mabel, every day; and at length Mabel received one naming the day when they should start on the homeward journey.

"Roy is still very feeble," wrote Briggs, "but he so longs for his mother and home, that Doctor Winters thinks it will be the better thing to start with him. His mother must be prepared to find him much changed. We delegate the task of preparing her, to you. The shock suffered by his system has been a terrible one, and it will be a long time before he recovers strength, if he ever does. I will write to Harry concerning all needed preparations for receiving him at the train, and you had better see that a bed-room is ready for him, below stairs. He often speaks of getting back into his old room, but I must tell you, that we have but little reason to hope that Roy will ever go into his own chamber again. He is very happy and quiet in his trust in Christ, and the consciousness of forgiveness; and waits patiently for events to come about, as his Heavenly Father shall direct. But we can see, day by day, that he is pining for his home. Mrs. Stanley is to him all that his mother could be; and will of course accompany us to

Masonville. The people here are doing all that Christian kindness can suggest: the ladies of the W C. T. U. have been tireless in their attention from the first, and Dr. Winters has been like a brother to Roy. I have come to love Christ more than ever, as I have seen him and learned him in his representatives among this people."

"They will be here on the train to-morrow evening," said Harry, as he came from the post-office, reading his letter, and met Mabel and Mr. and Mrs. Windham at a corner.

"Yes; and everything must be ready," said Mr. Windham.

"Briggs writes," said Harry, "that we must have a cot, and carry him on it up the hill."

"That will be easily enough done. He must still be very feeble—from Mabel's letter, which we have just read."—

"Yes, he must be; more so than I had thought," said Harry; "but we must get him well when he gets home."

"Yes, yes; but now," said Mr. Windham, "I think you had better go with us up to the house; we were on our way. Have you time, Harry?"

"Certainly—I will take time for anything that I can do."

"Well, we will go then right along, and see what has to be done there; and then you and I will come back and see about further preparations. We may have to make a cot."

"Who will we ask to bear him?" said Harry.

"You and I; and Newton would be good; there

will be no lack. But let us get those who will bring as few painful reflections as possible."

"As for that," said Mrs. Windham, "I think Roy must have passed that; and all Masonville would be glad to help Roy."

"Yes, that's so," said Mr. Windham.

So the party took their way to the farm-house.

The place was very quiet. Mary Mason was sitting in an invalid chair in the sun, on the porch, with Napoleon at her feet. The dog arose to meet Mabel at the gate, as he always did, and followed the party as they crossed the lawn; then he took his place again beside the chair, thrusting his nose into the hand of his mistress. Nappy was a very sober dog, since so much trouble had come to the house, and never ventured off the premises; kept himself very closely to the person of his one friend; but always met Mabel at the gate, and followed her that far when she went out.

"We bring you glad tidings, Mrs. Mason," said Mrs. Windham. "Roy will arrive to-morrow evening."

Mary Mason said nothing, but reaching out her hand to Mabel, turned her head on the pillow, and closed her eyes, while a half smile from her lips met the tears that stole down her cheeks.

"And," continued Mrs. Windham, gently pressing her brow with her hand, "there are some preparations necessary, for you know he will be very tired. And we have come to get everything ready. I am at home enough here, by this time, to follow Mabel, or Mrs. Lewis, anywhere about the house. I'll call

Mrs. Lewis, and go right about the work, and leave Mabel to talk to you."

"You are very kind, dear friends, all," said Mary Mason, looking up, and brushing away her tears. You will excuse my tears, I know. I have waited so long for my boy, and now am helpless to make ready for him."

"Dear Mary," said Mrs. Windham, "if you but knew what a pleasure it is to us."

"Yes, I do know; go in and do whatever you find necessary. Mrs. Lewis is good and helpful, but she has her own house, too; and Roy will not find his room as he left it. Mabel dear, you go and see about it too; you needn't stay with me; have it as nearly as it used to be as possible; and his room needs"—

"Dear Mrs. Mason," said Mabel, "Roy can't go to his room. Mrs. Windham, let me go in; you sit here. She must know everything now, and I cannot tell her."

"What is it?" gasped Mary Mason; "you said it was good news."

"Yes, so it is, yet sad." The others went in, and Mrs. Windham, taking the seat beside the invalid, told her the whole story of Roy's disaster, which had been kept from her until she must know. Mrs. Windham read her the letters just received by Harry and Mabel, for she thought she might just as well be prepared for the worst that could come.

It was a cruel revelation to Mary Mason. It seemed that her cup of sorrow was more than full; and yet the fact that her boy was coming home a clean, redeemed soul, did sweeten its bitterness.

"You can afford to rejoice, my dear Mrs. Mason," said Mrs. Windham. "Even the loss of all earthly hope is not to be compared to this eternal gain."

"True," said Mary Mason: "and I have always prayed that God would give me a true, noble man out of my boy, at all hazards: a white-souled man; and I am glad to know that after all my failure he has found a way to answer my prayer. Oh, what would life be to me now, without Christ and the hope of immortality! The world that is out of sight is more real to me to-day than the things I touch and see. I gave all to the King long ago, and I do not care now how soon the final transfer of my home is made to his country. John, and Roy, and I; we shall start in the new life from the vantage ground of much experience of this; which will set that in a light of peculiar bliss.

"Thank you, dear Mrs. Windham, for taking up your cross and telling me all this. I am content; I am ready now to receive my boy, just as the Lord sends him to me, so that I but know that the good will of God works on in spite of sin, and death, and ruin."

The hours were busy that intervened. The carpet was taken up in the parlor, shaken, and replaced, and a bed, modern in all that could constitute comfort and neatness, placed in it. Vases filled with flowers were standing all about, and a rack of blooming plants placed in the south window. There was a question whether they should bring down any of the pictures and familiar things from Roy's own room. Mabel went to Roy's mother about it.

"No," she said; "you could never make it seem like his own room. Let that remain as it was Nothing has been changed, and he may like to know this; besides, he may some time be able to be taken up to it. I should like him to find it as he left it."

The parlor had a south and west exposure, and Mrs. Windham noticed, as she arranged the bed, that Roy's pillow would command a beautiful view of the town, the valley, the river, the track of the railway over the old meadow, Sunset Hill, and the dock of the "Gazelle."

"Dear boy," she sighed, "how much this will suggest to him. He will have plenty of companionship in the memories of the past."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ALL ready! Hi! my man. How your eyes shine!"

It was Doctor Winter's cheery voice as he came to Roy's room at the Summit House, the morning of the departure.

"We've just about time to get you nicely down to the depot before the train is due. How do you feel?"

"Nicely, doctor:" replied Roy, in a voice grown thin, but still with something of the old brave tone in it.

"A little excited, I see," said the doctor, with his hand on the boy's wrist. "Well, that is to be expected; but mind your knitting, my boy, as my mother used to say when I wore aprons; and don't undertake to run the engine yourself, or push from behind. Why, what's the matter, boy?"

Roy's eyes had quickly filled at this playful allusion.

"Oh, nothing whatever, doctor," he replied, with a smile. "You ought to know, by this time, that I am Roy's sister."

"Well, yes," said the doctor, with a laugh; "you are a little girlish, sometimes, these days—but I'd like

to know who has a better right! But, seriously, you must keep cool about this journey, as though you were in this room. Keep your eye on Mrs. Stanley—and —yes, a look at Briggs occasionally; but never you mind anything else. People will stare at you, and you are inclined to be sensitive; but attend to the one business of keeping quiet, and getting home in good condition. I see no reason why you should not be even stronger for the trip."

Roy was dressed in a neat navy blue fatigue suit, with spotless linen; but as he lay on the out side of the bed, nothing could hide the dismal reality of his helplessness. His face was very white, and the slender, symmetrical line of his mustache, showed very dark on his pale lips. His large .black eyes seemed to occupy more than their share of his face; his massive forehead looked like polished marble; his curly hair was closely cropped, but dark as night; and his was a face, once seen, never forgotten.

Dr. Winters thought this, as he stood and looked at him; giving his kind words of counsel, for the homeward journey. The boy had crowded his way into the heart of the good physician; and it was with no slight pang of regret, that he came to assist in sending him out of his sight forever; for he knew that before many months had passed, the noble face before him would be hidden under the sod of his native valley.

"All ready, sir!" said the clerk of the hotel, as he came with porters, bearing a cot.

Roy was taken up tenderly, and laid upon it. Mrs. Stanley, in her travelling dress, was at hand, and ar-

ranged his pillows, laid his hat over his face, so as to partly conceal it from the curious; and covered his body with her travelling shawl. The porters took up the cot, and bore it down the stairway, and through the hall; while the servants, boarders and transients, stood at the doors along the way, watching —some with curious interest, but many with real sympathy—the first stage of Roy's journey home.

It was concluded best to take him to the depot on the litter, rather than subject him to the fatigue of removal to and from a carriage.

So the little procession passed down the street; Doctor Winters carrying an umbrella over Roy, and Willie Briggs walking at his side; Mrs. Stanley having gone in a carriage. They arrived some moments before the train; and there gathered about the door of the waiting-room, the usual throng of depot loungers. Among them were some of those who had seen Roy that night in the saloon; and who had gathered about him, as he lay in the depot after the accident.

Roy removed his hat from his face, and looked around at the crowd. He recognized some faces, and reached out his hand; and after a moment of embarrassed waiting, they came up, one by one, and took his hand.

"Boys," he said, "let the drink alone; it's doing you no good; it's going to beat you in the end; you're no match for whiskey."

"That's so," said one.

"Yes, that's so;" replied a voice from the crowd at the door, and a young man stepped forward whom

Roy recognized as the one who had sung in the saloon that night. He came forward, and taking Roy's hand, as he removed his cap, he said:

"I've wanted to see you for days. I have never sang that hymn since that night, and I never shall."

"O yes," said Roy. "You must learn what it means, and then sing it for true. I've prayed for you, since Jesus taught me how to pray. I shall go home, praying for you, that you may come so near to God, that he can save you, as he has me."

The young man's eyes grew moist; and with a strong pressure of the hand which he held, he turned away, and with his cap to his face, passed into the crowd.

The whistle of the train was heard; and all was bustle and hurry. Roy felt the blood rush through his veins, and an energy that was strangely defeated by his physical lack, thrilled his nerves. He longed to get up and walk; he felt that he could, but instead he was lifted in the arms of the doctor and Briggs, and carried aboard the train—Mrs. Stanley following closely, with his pillows and hat in her hands.

His berth in the Pullman car was all ready for him, having been ordered by telegram; and he was laid in his place for the journey. The doctor spoke a hearty farewell, and the train moved on, with its precious freight.

Mrs. Stanley had engaged two sections opposite each other, and they were soon made very comfortable, by the active sympathetic co-operation of the trainmen, who, with the passengers, seemed to vie with each other in contributing to the needs of the party

Many incidents of that journey proved that the 'milk of human kindness' was not a fable, after all, and that railroad men are tender, as well as brave.

One incident must be woven into our tale, because of its bearing on the moral of our story.

A gay family party, consisting of father, mother, a son of about twenty-two, a beautiful daughter of eighteen, and a little sprite of a girl, that reminded Roy of Mabel as he first saw her, occupied the adjoining sections of the car.

Roy was, from the first, an object of real interest to this party. The mother, a lovely matronly lady, called upon Mrs. Stanley, with so much of true womanly delicacy in her proffers of assistance, that she was charmed; and it was not long before a railroad intimacy ripened between the two companies. Herbert Wyman and his sisters, Alice and Gertrude, soon made Roy's acquaintance, and brought very much of real pleasure to the invalid, as they chatted, read, and sang for him; and he became quite merry in the society of the little Gertrude.

Their start had been quite an early one; and Roy, under the excitement of the preparations of travel, had eaten nothing to speak of; so at an early hour, Mrs. Stanley asked the porter to bring her lunch basket, and stand a table for her, in her section; and she proceeded to prepare a dainty lunch. Roy was propped up with pillows, and looked on with animated eyes, as the Wyman's followed suit, and watched the graceful antics of the little girl.

Among other things that Mrs. Wyman drew from her basket, was a bottle of wine, which she handed to

her son to open. Roy felt sick for a moment, and then, as the cork was drawn with the familiar report, and the crimson liquor poured into the glass, and the delicious odor stole to his senses, he felt his nerves thrill and tingle. The blood rushed to his cheeks and ears, and a wild, unhallowed fire kindled in his eyes. Willie Briggs was assisting Mrs. Stanley in unpacking her basket, and holding a plate which she was filling for Roy. He heard the sound of the cork, as it was drawn from the bottle; and a quick glance backward at the Wymans, and then at Roy, revealed the situation. He stepped at once to Roy, placing himself between him and the sight of the wine, and bending over him, he whispered:

"Don't mind them, dear Roy."

A feverish look of impatience and greed came to Roy's eye, and an angry exclamation to his lips. He put up his hand to push Willie away. It was a terrible moment for Willie Briggs. He felt how utterly helpless he was, knowing, as he did, the dreadful power of this spell of the poured wine, with its odor filling the air; and he cried out in the bitterness of his soul's need, "O Christ, help us!" and tears sprang to his eyes.

Roy had his hand lifted to strike, but as the low cry of his friend fell upon his ear, with the name of Christ, there came a flash of light into his mind. He saw his danger, remembered all the past, and throwing his arm about Willie's neck he clung to him, and repeated his prayer, "O Christ, help me;" and strength was given for victory; and when a moment after Alice Wyman came with a glass of wine in one

beautiful hand, and a napkin of delicate cake in the other, with 'mamma's compliments,' he had the strength to say:

"No wine, please; but I will enjoy the cake."

"No wine?" said the sweet-voiced girl. "You look as though a little wine would do you good. You had better try it."

"No wine for me, please, Miss Wyman;" and as he saw she was disposed to press the matter, and feeling his weakness with the tempting glass before him, he added impetuously:

"Take it away, please, quick! But for wine I should be able to walk like your brother."

"Oh, dreadful," cried Alice Wyman, and retreated to her mother; where she repeated his words as she returned the glass. The Wymans all looked quickly toward Roy, with curiosity as well as interest; and from that time, during the remainder of their journey together, there was somewhat of reserve in their manner, although they were still kindly attentive; but Roy and Willie both observed that there was no further display of wine. Mrs. Stanley did not know of this little episode, as she had left her seat for a few moments, and it was kept between Willie and Roy, and was to them a source of thanksgiving too deep for words, because of the victory that had come through the name of Jesus.

"But Willie," said Roy, as they were taking their lunch from the same plate, "what if I had been alone? What if some time it should come to me, when there is no one near to help me? I shudder to think of it!"

"Dear Roy," said Willie Briggs, "the time will never come when there will be no one near to help you; for Jesus says he will never leave nor forsake you. If you trust him, all will be well. My experience is that with every temptation he will make a way of escape; but you will not be often tempted as you were to-day. When one is travelling they must always be prepared for strange things."

"I don't think I could be tempted just that way again," said Roy. "But do you know, Willie, I came just as near striking you as could be. Oh, I did want that wine awfully, for a minute."

"Yes, I know. I've been there: and I felt it myself. But I've learned how to hide in Christ when temptation comes from without or within."

The next morning the Wymans reached the end of their journey, and came to bid Roy good-by. There were many expressions of sympathy and kind wishes. Alice came after all the others, and as she gave him her hand, she said:

"I'm so sorry, Mr. Mason, I offered you that wine, as it made you think of such dreadful things. I've been troubled about it."

"Oh, Miss Wyman," replied Roy, "don't ever offer it to anybody: don't touch it, for it makes people do the most dreadful things. Don't ever again."

There was something in Roy's face, as he said this, holding the daintily gloved hand, that almost compelled the reply:

"I promise you, Mr. Mason, I never will, never again."

"O thank you: God bless you!" whispered Roy

"Come, Alice!" cried her brother, stepping back toward her, "the train will move."

"Good-by," she said, as she tripped away, fluttering her hand toward him. "I will never forget."

Roy waved his farewell from the window as the train passed her on the platform, where she stood, looking toward his window.

"Oh, I'm so glad," he sighed, and nestled back in his pillow with a look of triumphant joy, that made Mrs. Stanley come to his side, and lay her hand on his head, with the caressing touch that always warmed his heart with a thought of his mother.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

HE next station is Masonville," said the conductor, stopping at Roy's berth; "you will be glad to leave the train, I guess."

"Oh, is it? Are we most there?" asked Roy, in a thin, tired tone.

He had become very weary, and the last few hours had been anxious ones to his attendants.

"Yes, we are almost there," said Willie Briggs.

Roy tried to rise, but Mrs. Stanley said, laying her hand on him again:

"Don't exert yourself, dear; we will do everything for you, you know; and you must remain very quiet. You are very tired, and have much yet to pass through before you can rest."

"Yes: but it will be all joy that I pass through, getting home to my mother," answered Roy. "Oh, I wish the train would hurry up."

Mrs. Stanley busied herself about him, doing many needless things, as she saw he could thus be kept more quiet, and the train rattled, and the wheels hummed, and soon Roy caught sight from the window of a familiar point in the landscape, and knew that the train was bearing down into the lap of his native valley. He could be kept still no longer.

"Please lift me up, Willie, I must see. Oh, there's the Sunset Hill. Let me see our home, just 'tother side. Oh, there it is! And ain't somebody on the porch? Is it my mother?"

The whistle screamed, the train slowed down, the brakes creaked, and there fell a great hush in the place that had been so full of sound. The moment the train slackened, Harry swung himself aboard, and in another moment had Roy in his arms.

"Hello, old fellow!" sobbed Roy, flinging his arm about his friend's neck.

"Lift him carefully," said Willie Briggs.

"Out this side," said Mr. Windham. Roy felt himself taken up and carried, while a widening sea of faces new and old grew about him. He was laid on the cot, in the presence of an awe-struck crowd, who had gathered to see Roy Mason come home.

"All aboard?" shouted the conductor, and the train steamed on, and Roy was taken up for the last stage of his journey. He was carried up the street; and up along the road-way toward the farm-house; when suddenly there came a flash of the old glory in his eyes. The setting sun again kindled all the windows with celestial fire; and he saw, as in a vision, the dear form of his mother, as she stood that night on the porch so long ago, and waved her white arm bared to the elbow toward him, as he sat on the lane fence; and he seemed again to hear the notes of the same old hymn, and he murmured:

"Nearer, my God, to thee,
E'en though it be a cross"—

and the refrain seemed to be caught up, and echoed by the tones of the lost maiden of the glen; and again as in a transformation scene, he saw her, as she stood on the hill-side at sunset, waving her handkerchief to him as he stood on the deck of the Gazelle, with all the glory of heaven poured in a golden flood upon her head, and flowing to her feet, and he whispered: "Mabel!"

He felt a touch on his hand, that had dropped over the side of the cot, and a low whine of joy from Napoleon, who had met him at the gate, and walked by his side to the house. Roy was carried in at the parlor door, lifted from the cot, laid upon his bed, and left alone. In an instant Mary Mason, supported by Mabel, entered and closed the door.

We will remain outside, with those who with bowed heads, and silent weeping, waited.

Among those who bore Roy to his home, was George Newton; and as Mrs. Stanley saw him from the carriage, as she followed the little cavalcade, she recognized him; and a tumult of fear and trembling hope shook her frame. Her anxiety to deliver Roy safely to his mother, however, restrained her; but when she knew he was in her arms, she could wait no longer.

Mrs. Windham and Mrs. Brayton were waiting to receive her, as she stepped from the carriage, and lead her direct to the house; but she said:

"Excuse me a moment, ladies; and leaving them wondering, she crossed the lawn and surprised Newton, who had not seen her, with the question:

"George Newton, where is my boy?"

Newton turned and met the stern set face before him, and grew deadly pale.

"Mrs. Stanley!" he gasped; "you here?"

"Yes, I am come, and oh, where is my boy?"

With hands clasped before her, she waited for an answer.

He stood dumb for a moment, and then taking her arm, he supported her to a rustic seat around the trunk of a gnarled apple tree, and seating her, he said:

"I hoped never to have to answer that question, Mrs. Stanley; I did what I could to save him,—but"—

"Failed?" she whispered.

"Yes—failed. He lies up yonder;" and he pointed to the cemetery, that was just visible through the trees

"Mrs. Mason buried him among her dead."

Mrs. Stanley sat statuesque, with her eyes fixed upon the white stones that marked the place of graves; her hands clasped before her, without a sigh, or tear, or any sign, — until Mr. Newton became alarmed. He touched her arm, and said:

"Dear Mrs. Stanley"—

"Yes," she answered, after a moment, lifting her eyes upward to the tops of the hills, golden with the last light of the sun. Yes, my Father—the secret is with thee. I wait—I wait on thee. I will go to Roy now. George, lead me in."

As she walked with him across the lawn, toward the house, leaning heavily on his arm, she said:

"Yes—it is time for the home to find a voice. It is time for it to speak and be heard, and oh, Demon of Rum, what canst thou answer?"